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EDITORIAL

How Essential is the Bible?

Christians have been called the people of a book. That does not mean that they are the custodians of a sacred scripture, which it is their duty to preserve and to respect, but rather that their identity springs from the Bible. It is in this sense that Christians today in parts of Africa are distinguished from their neighbours by being called "readers". Their newly acquired skill is shrewdly connected with their newly acquired religion. There is an essential relationship between Bible reading and Christian faith.

Faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour depends upon the Bible for its basis and its nourishment. If you are in doubt about this dependence, then you do not know the Bible. Conversely, if you do not know the Bible, you may fall into the lamentable error of confusing ideals and good intentions with faith. The real content of Christianity is to be found in the Bible, and all books about Christianity are only of use as they illuminate the pages of the Bible. Many fulsome tributes by prominent Roman Catholic and Protestant churchmen were recently printed in a full page advertisement of a new Life of Christ, which has been

published in the United States, but the New York Herald Tribune added hesitatingly in a review the only convincing comment: "It may even set up a movement for reading the Bible!"

One might suppose that amongst students, who are selected for their literacy and their enquiring minds, there would be such a movement for reading the Bible. But, in general, that would not appear to be the case. Far too many Christian students are content with recollections from childhood of Bible stories, or with a cursory acquaintance with certain prophetic passages and the outline of the gospel story, or with an anthological knowledge which is dilettante rather than religious. This issue of *The Student World* has been prepared as a challenge to another generation to take the Bible seriously as a book that must be read like any other fundamental text, — or, indeed, studied more thoroughly than any other, because it alone is fundamental to all true knowledge.

Apart from the more obvious factors of intellectual indifference or laziness, which affect us all, there is a deeper reason why many thoughtful people do not read the Bible, which must be honestly faced in ecumenical circles. The friends of the Bible have done it a disservice. It has been re-catalogued in the mental library of students out of the section headed "real life" and hidden away in the section entitled "peculiar religion". One might almost say that the habit of treating the Bible solemnly has resulted in its not being taken seriously. Every time anyone of us speaks sententiously about the Bible from a particular point of view — whether it be fundamentalist or modernist, continental or anglo-saxon, sociological or pietist — he prevents the Bible from speaking for itself. God forgive us! We treat the Bible as if we knew its secret, and those who find our opinions trite or unconvincing, confuse them with the Bible itself.

Of course that is not the whole story. The writers in this issue are very varied in their points of view. In the Federation we must continue to encourage, in conferences and in articles, that biblical discussion, which has been

so creative in the past. But all our writing and speaking and discussing must be designed to stimulate students to read the Bible for themselves. None of us must assume a superior attitude about the Bible, or seem to deny the validity of other conceptions. The only thing to be despised in any approach to the Bible is insincerity. The title of Suzanne de Diétrich's wartime booklet, *Rediscovering the Bible*, was a good one. It is a discovery which has again and again to be remade by each generation, in its own situation, in its own way.

The English Bible indicates on its title page that it was "appointed to be read in Churches". The intention was that men should hear it read, and the opportunity was so precious that they fastened it to the reading desk with chains! But we do not any longer go to Church to hear the Bible read. The "lessons" have become incidental to the structure of the service. Too often they are the least impressive moments in a liturgy, or are reduced to a few disconnected verses for the benefit of the preacher. Very few students ever hear the Bible read at all. Is this not a place for S.C.M. initiative? Could we not institute periods in the life of our universities and colleges in which the Bible would be read in public, clearly and at length, with only the minimum of comment to provide the setting and remove obscurities. It might prove a more effective way of witness than all our ingenious attempts to relate Christianity to the interests of our fellow students.

For the Bible must make its own impact upon us. We normally live in a more limited world than the Bible, and do not ask the great questions it answers. Yet we avoid these questions at our peril. Therefore we must take the difficult course of exposing our minds to the full force of the Bible, like a swimmer plunging into a torrent. The translators of the English Bible, in their dedication to King James, refer to "selfconceited Brethren, who run their own ways, and give liking unto nothing, but what is framed by themselves, and hammered on their anvil"! The Bible shatters such man-made constructions of life, and the results are always painful. Unless our daily

Bible reading and our Bible study circles get us to that point, they are deluding us. The Bible can bring us comfort, it does lead us into the desired haven, but only after it has cut our moorings. And our moorings are so deeply embedded in prejudice and contentment that we are loath to give them up.

The hardest thing to realise in the Bible is that it is really about an event. We get so easily entangled in the details that we miss the startling fact they record. The Bible tells us how God once went into action, and that is such alarming news that we try to escape from it into the glamour which has been built up round the sacred story. But He did go into action, and He does. For that is the other alarming characteristic of the Bible — that, once you accept its unspeakable historic assertion, you must be open to the consequences today. The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob came in Jesus Christ. And He has not stopped coming, and you cannot stop Him. If there is any manual for living in the unstable and incalculable world of today, it is the Bible. The answer to the question How Essential is the Bible? is simply the measure of our response to the demands of God upon us here and now.

R. C. M.

The Federation is publishing a little book about Bible study, entitled *A Living Record*. Copies at s. fr. 3.—; 3/6 d; \$ 0.75 may be obtained from 13, rue Calvin, Geneva.



The Word of God and the Written Word

J. ERIC FENN

A few months ago I broadcast a service on a Sunday morning about the Bible. In the course of it I said that the Bible "contained the Word of God", a phrase which is usual in the Church to which I belong and which, as we should claim, has warrant in the writings of the Reformers. I received one extremely abusive letter from a woman who regarded me as of the Devil because I had not said that the Bible *is* the Word of God. That sets the question with which I have been asked to deal in this article. We all use the term "the Word of God" with reference to the Bible; what is the connection between what is written in the Bible and this "Word of God"?

The current biblical discussion

My mind goes back to a group of British scholars who met at Dr. J. H. Oldham's invitation in 1936, as part of the preparations for the Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State in 1937, to discuss a paper by Prof. Emil Brunner which had been circulated beforehand. Dr. Brunner was there, and so was the late Canon B. H. Streeter of Oxford University. As we went round the room making comments or asking questions, Streeter asked the question with which we have to deal. He prefaced it by saying that he could understand the "Fundamentalist" position (which he outlined) and the "Modernist" view (which he again outlined), but he could not understand Brunner's position, which

seemed to belong to neither : what then was the connection between the Word of God and the Bible ? Prof. Brunner, with his usual charm, thanked Canon Streeter for expressing better than he could himself the difference between orthodoxy and modernism and went on to say emphatically that "modernism was of the essence of sin"! Those of us who knew Canon Streeter's views waited to see the effect of this forthright statement, but Streeter himself, as we might have known, was the first to appreciate the position, and the group dissolved into laughter. The same lack of comprehension has recently been shewn in the discussion between Niebuhr and Barth in the pages of *The Christian News-Letter*, arising out of Barth's speech at Amsterdam. In Great Britain itself, the situation we have been familiar with for some generations, in which Fundamentalism and Modernism have stood opposed, has been confused, as Dr. Barth hints in his reply to Niebuhr, by the growth of a generation of younger theologians who have been much influenced by the "Continental" theology and who seem to belong to neither of the two well-known parties. This may be the beginning of better things ; but there is no doubt that the immediate result is confusion.

The problem of communication

I do not flatter myself that I shall be able to shed light where Barth and Niebuhr walk in darkness, placing their formidable blows in the empty air. One of Barth's most devastating charges against "Anglo-Saxon" theology is that it lacks mystery and is therefore dull. I confess to having very often found it dull without knowing the reason, but I take leave to hesitate before agreeing that the reason is lack of a sense of mystery ; it may be that we find the mystery in another place and in other terms. However that may be, Barth's remark may serve as a necessary reminder that when we ask after the connection between the Word of God

and the written word, we are raising the whole problem of communication between God and Man, and we have need of a certain reverent agnosticism which is sometimes sadly lacking in theological discussion, whether Anglo-Saxon or Continental!

Communication is an essentially mysterious process. We are so used to it between man and man that we easily forget how very mysterious it is, and how curiously compact of speech and action, sound and gesture, matter and spirit. Written communication, as for instance my writing this article for you to read, is peculiarly dangerous because open to so many ways of misunderstanding without the compensation of further explanation. It is necessarily a sort of petrified speech needing a great deal of sympathy and imagination for right understanding. Yet a man has only three ways of communication open to him: that of direct speech and immediate response, that of the significant gesture or significant action, and that of writing. In the end of the day what he means is only remembered if what he said or what he did is written down, either by himself or by other people. That we should thus be able to recover his meaning is mystery, and anyone who has studied history or philosophy or literature knows very well how demanding it is of hard work and disciplined imagination.

The new approach to the Bible

The Bible is a very queer assortment of books because it is the literature of a people. As with any other people and any other literature it contains an account of origins, a history of development, songs and poems, drama and story. The composition of this library stretches over some 1,000 years or more, and a great deal of painstaking care has been spent in the past century or so on trying to date the various documents and sources, and a great deal more, particularly in the past fifty years, has gone to discovering records outside

the Bible from which to reconstruct in some measure the civilizations of the Near East covering the same span of time. As a result we have a vast deal more information about the life of Israel and of the surrounding peoples than our ancestors had. For the great painters of the Middle Ages and later, the characters of the Bible were universal and timeless, people who might just as well be depicted in the fashions of mediaeval Florence or Flanders as not. For us they have taken on new life and are seen in their historical setting, akin to other people in other tribes of the same period ; they are at once more alive and more remote in time because of the consuming interest in history which is a relatively new thing in our world and a mark of the modern age.

What has made the difference for us today is this rise of the historical approach and the scientific method. We forget how new this is, especially as applied to the Bible ; and we are apt to discount it too easily. It is little short of revolutionary in its effect, and one of the great divisions is between those who only see the meaning of the Bible when they have made some attempt to see it in its historical setting, and those who still regard it as abstractly universal, directly applicable to the here and now. It was enough for our forebears to believe that "the Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah" ; we want to ask how it came and when and with reference to what historical situation — and how he knew. Similarly, when Genesis asserts that God made the earth and in a certain order of creation, that was enough for our ancestors ; the modern man wants to know who wrote Genesis, and what his authority was for saying what he did, and how what he says squares with what other people said about the origin of things. The two tempers of mind are poles apart.

Archaeology has gone far to prove that the Bible is historical ; but even to put the matter thus is to betray our modern temper, for men of other times would not have dreamt of calling in research to bolster

up the Bible. We must. We cannot escape from our heritage, nor recross the watershed between their time and ours ; or, if we do so, we find that we have called in magic and destroyed religion. There can be no return to a magical book without a destruction of integrity. What then can we say about the Word of God ?

The Bible as the mirror of God

The Bible is an interpretation of history, a religious account of man's origin, man's progress through the centuries, man's destiny. It is all that ; yet that does not amount to saying that it is the Word of God. It is the record of a people's pilgrimage, and of a people whose seers saw everything in relation to God ; yet it could be all that and yet not merit the august title Word of God. The heart of the question lies deeper, at the point where we believe that this people's account of its history and experience is true, and that in very deed God acted in history as they said He acted, so that in their pilgrimage we trace not their steps alone, but His. From that decisive point onwards we begin to see the Bible as the revelation of God, in action, in history, through His dealing with a people : it becomes a mirror in which we see not the clouded glass of human experience, but the image of the invisible God.

A man that looks on glass
On it may stay his eye ;
Or, if he pleases, through it pass
And then the heaven espy.

The writers of the New Testament, looking back over the past from their new vantage point beyond the Resurrection and Pentecost, saw the nature of the Word of God more clearly than most of us do today. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything

made that hath been made... And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." The "Word of God" is none other than Christ, come to full expression in Jesus of Nazareth, but Lord and motive power of history. He it was who was pressing home on men's lives all the way through the Old Testament, seeking entrance to human life, gradually moulding men's thought and life, coming, always coming "to his own", even when they received him not, and now, at last, come in the flesh. To go back to our previous analogy, he was and is, as St. Paul says, "the image of the invisible God", the image which we discern everywhere when we peer carefully into the mirror. This long process — though, indeed, it is but a moment compared with the time Man has been on the earth — recorded in the Old Testament is the story of the progressive incarnation of the Word of God; and yet it is none other than St. Paul who confesses that still, even in the light of Bethlehem, Galilee, Calvary, the Tomb and the Upper Room, "we see through a glass, darkly". The Prophets look forward to a time when what they see in part and what they prophesy about in part shall be fully known, and St. Paul confesses to a similar incompleteness.

I therefore stick to the phrase which caused such anger in my radio correspondent: the Bible contains the Word of God. To put it as she wished seems to me dangerous, for it leaves the door wide open to bibliolatry. The light which reaches us through the written word is the light of God, but it is refracted in the medium of human experience and human history. That is a risk inherent in the method God chose to use in making Himself known to men: they might misunderstand, they might disobey, they might distort His message and misconstrue His actions. Therefore, to get at the Word of God in the written word means hard work and expert guidance, and a moral and spiritual sensitiveness which can only come from the discipline of

worship. That is why we need the sermon and why the sermon should be exposition and why the preacher needs to undertake his task with fear and trembling. It is not accidental that the Bible is the book of a people, or that it is addressed in the first instance, not to the world in general but to the believing community, whether under the Old Covenant or the New. It cannot be foisted on a unbelieving world from outside ; its authentication lies in the life of the Church, which is the bridge between God and the world.

The break with the past

I realise that this is to make a break with the past, and a break not only with the pre-reformation Church but with the Reformers and their descendants : it is a break made necessary by the rise of historical and scientific method. You can regard the historical and scientific movement as aberration, as the beginning of apostasy, and many people do so regard it ; yet it has given great gifts to men and has brought new life to theology. In large measure I think it is true to say that the Church as a whole has disregarded it, or at best paid lip-service to it, and has thus led people to conclude that Christianity is the refuge of obscurantism. "The man-in-the-pew", in Britain at any rate, still believes that the Church is "fundamentalist", because he has not been taught otherwise and his pastors and teachers have dodged the issue ; and the incursion of the "Continental Theology" among us has made the confusion worse because preachers have begun again to use the old language, associated with fundamentalism, without making their meaning clear. I have had that complaint levelled at the clergy too often by intelligent laymen to be unaware of its force. And where an attempt has been made to recover the historical situation so that the message of the Hebrew Prophets (to take but one example) is given reality again and clothed in flesh and blood, the stark grandeur of the "Word of God"

has come home to men's minds and hearts afresh and with something of its inherent power.

But this break with the past is less a break with the religious message of the Bible than a change in the way we get at it. The revelation of God to man is seen in history rather than in the book which records it, and as that history comes alive so once more the divine message comes through it to our own hearts. The written word is the vehicle of something not to be confused with it, a means by which the "lost dimension" is restored to human life (which is perhaps partly what Karl Barth means). And we have reason to be grateful that we live on our side of the watershed which separates the modern world from the classical ages of Christian history. We have less excuse than our fathers if the Bible seems dull to us.

To show the truth of this would require a book and has been done already by people more competent than I; but there is one central point to which we must return. The Bible only becomes itself for those who recognize the validity of the witness of the People of God to their own life and experience. Its message comes home to us only when we begin to believe that God has acted as they proclaim He has. Not that everything they say about God is necessarily right, for there is room for error and mistake in their apprehension of His ways; but that the great curve of the history of the People of God, from its dim beginning to its present moment in the Church of Jesus Christ, can only be accounted for as God's action and Man's response. How do we come to this point of decisive belief?

The Bible from within

This is the heart of the mystery, and it is the mystery of faith. The fact that we can and do pass over from objective scrutiny of the records to living faith is the chief evidence for the existence of a Word of God as well as a written word, for it is a product of the study

of what is written, the imaginative re-creation of what is written about, and the activity of the Holy Spirit. It could hardly occur unless the claim of the Bible to be more than a record were true, for only in the context of a divine reality does it make sense. For some people it is a simple act of acceptance, a response to the truth of the message because it is greater than anything they have met before — as when the heathen heart is touched and broken open by some fragment of the Gospel read without context and without explanation. That does happen and we do well to remember it. For others it is a response to authority, the acceptance of the Bible as true because the Church (in one form or another) asserts it to be true. For others the decisive moment comes gradually, after much pondering, much striving with the spirits, much wandering in the half-light. But in the end of the day the thing vindicates itself, if we let it, by being the most illuminating and most searching interpretation of human life and divine working in the world. We approach it at first from the outside, comparing it with this or that alternative. From within, all vision is changed, and we see all reality more clearly, with deepening apprehension and a peace of mind which flows from the assurance that God is what He is here proclaimed to be. Yet this assurance is always beyond us, always certain yet always incomplete, always to be appropriated anew. The one thing we may not do with the Bible is to take it for granted as a charm or talisman or magical book, for then it loses its life and is drained of its power. It yields its riches only to those who set themselves to recapture its meaning again and again. It is like a house which bears over its portals the ominous words, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall".

Which comes first, the Church or the Bible ?

A. G. HEBERT

So long as the Christian Revelation is regarded as consisting of a number of truths, stated in propositions, and demanding the assent of our faith, it would seem that no end is in sight to the wrangle between Catholics and Protestants on this question. On the Catholic side, appeal is made to Scripture and Tradition ; but since systematic theology provides a rational formulation of the Faith, and Scripture does not, the traditional doctrine becomes primary, and the chief function of Scripture comes to be that of furnishing proof-texts. "The Church to teach, and the Bible to prove" is a formula which has been familiar also in some Anglican circles. Here the Church comes first, and the Bible second ; and the Bible is to be interpreted in the way which Church tradition sanctions. It can even be argued that the Bible derives its authority from the Church, since it was the Church which selected and canonised the books. On the other side, Protestantism began as an appeal against a corrupt Church to the authentic documents of the Faith, namely to the Bible. The preacher and the devout believer heard in the Bible the word of the living God ; the dogmatist accepted all the statements of the Bible as free from all possible error. The tradition of the Church was questioned and largely rejected ; the Bible was accepted as the final authority.

Thus there seemed to be an irreconcilable opposition between the authority of the Church and the Bible ; but both sides agreed in a rationalistic view of Revelation.

This in turn was attacked by Liberal Criticism, which subjected the books of the Bible to thorough investigation as human books, and in doing so effectually robbed them of their divine authority. Where the old orthodoxy had spoken of the promises of God made in the Messianic prophecies, the newer criticism could see only a human Messianic hope, variously expressed by different prophets, and conditioned by their circumstances and their psychological outlook.

Can the Biblical Theology which is with us today provide an answer to these questions ? We are now learning to see the Bible in the light of the Sacred History, that is, the history of the working out of the Purpose of God for man's salvation, through His choice of the one nation of Israel to be the People of God, and the reconstitution of Israel through the advent and the redemptive work of Jesus the Messiah, to be the universal *Ecclesia* for all nations. This is now common ground.

The immediate result appears to be that the Catholic claim is in a measure vindicated. In this scheme Israel the *Ecclesia*, the Church, takes the central place : the Church as a visible society on earth. Further, it is plain that the Tradition of the Church existed before the books were written : the tradition of the Exodus, before the earliest narratives were compiled about the eighth century B. C., the traditional account of the works of our Lord and of His teaching, before our gospels were written. Nothing is more characteristic of the most recent study, in the case of both Testaments, than the endeavour to see the books in the light of the tradition of the Faith as it existed at the time.

The making of the canon

But in studying the Bible as Bible, we are concerned not only with the books as originally written, but also with the books as canonised and used as Scripture, both within the Biblical period and since. The answer to the

question what makes the Scripture to be Scripture, and what is the difference between the books of the Bible and other books, must start from a study of the meaning of "canonisation". What did it mean when the Old Testament books were canonised? And how is the canonisation of the New Testament books related to their authority?

It is commonly agreed that the first book to be "canonised" was Deuteronomy (I assume that we can safely identify that book, in some form, with the law-book accepted in the Reform of Josiah in 622 B. C.). What did its acceptance mean? It meant that the *Ecclesia*, Israel, under its king, now formally bound itself to the confession of Yahweh, who had redeemed it out of Egypt, as the one Object of its worship, and the repudiation of the nature-religions of Canaan, so that the agricultural festivals were now to be celebrated in His honour; and to the acknowledgement of Him as lord over the whole national life, thus accepting in a positive form the prophetic denunciation of the national sins. So the long conflict between Yahweh and Baal was ended; a Covenant was made "to perform the words of the covenant that were written in the Book" which had been found in the Temple (II Kings 23 : 2-3). The Book was itself the programme of the Reform, and was now accepted as authoritative and binding, not as a piece of human legislation, but in the name of the Lord God to Whose initiative Israel owed its existence; and we must note that the Book contained not only laws, but also homilies on the redemptive acts of Yahweh and on Israel's consequent duty of love and loyalty to Him.

Which, then, came first, Church or Book? The Church, in order of time; but the Book stood from henceforth in the Church as the authoritative witness to Him Who had existed from the beginning and had called the Church into existence for His glory.

It is not necessary for us to discuss in any detail the canonisation of the rest of the Old Testament, the Pentateuch after the Exile, and then the Earlier and Later

Prophets, and the Writings ; for plainly they all fall under the same general formula which we have given for Deuteronomy. There is indeed uncertainty about the circumstances of their canonisation ; while there is good ground for thinking that the Pentateuch was formally accepted at the Reform of Esra, the two later sections of the Old Testament seem to have come gradually into acceptance by use. In any case, Deuteronomy had set the pattern ; as the first book to be accepted as an authoritative sacred book, it indicated that which the word "Scripture" was later to be used to signify.

The canonisation of the New Testament books is not to be attributed to the rather obscure Council at the end of the fourth century which was the first to give the exact list of books which is now recognized ; for that Council did no more than recognize an existing state of affairs. With regard to the canonical authority of the chief New Testament books, there had been substantial agreement since the latter part of the second century, when the Church replied to the Canon put out by Marcion by making its own collection of books, appealing to the apostolic tradition as it was held in the sees which had been founded by Apostles. These apostolic writings were now added to the Old Testament which the Church had accepted as Scripture from the beginning. In this selection of books, two things were requisite, an apostolic or quasi-apostolic name, and conformity with the apostolic teaching ; thus the "Gospel of Peter" was recognized as a Docetist forgery. Two main questions arise here.

The testimony of the records

First, to what did the accepted books bear witness ? The answer is plain : to the apostolic *kerugma*, and the apostolic *didache*. The latter covers the teaching about the Christian way of life contained in the Epistles, but also and especially the records of the teaching of the Lord Himself in the Gospels. The former is concerned

with the truth of the Christian Proclamation itself : "The time (to which the Prophets looked forward) is fully come, and the Kingdom (Reign, or Kingly Rule) of God has drawn near" ; "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His People." But was this true, in face of the fact that Jesus had been rejected by Israel as a blasphemous impostor, and had suffered the accursed death of crucifixion ? Yes, for God had vindicated the Crucified, by raising Him from the dead. The Resurrection of Jesus meant that the Gospel proclamation was true. So St. Paul argues in I Cor. 15 "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain, and ye are yet in your sins" (for in that case the promise of the New Covenant which was to bring remission of sins — Jer. 31 : 34 — has not been fulfilled) ; and further, "We apostles are found false witnesses of God" (and our primary testimony is to the Resurrection). That testimony could be given by the apostles in person while they lived ; after their death, it was available in the written records.

When therefore the post-apostolic Church appeals to the New Testament, it is appealing away from its own contemporary witness to that of the apostles. Therefore, we today have need of Biblical Criticism, to test this evidence by the best methods of historical investigation open to us, just as it was possible to cross-examine the apostles in person while they were alive ; and such investigation is our only means of proving that the records are the honest testimony of reliable witnesses, and not fabrications of legend.

The closing of the canon

Secondly, when the Church of the second century appealed against Marcion to the authentic apostolic writings, and tested the claims of books to apostolic authorship by its own sense of the truth of the Incarnation of God in true manhood, it was relying on the Holy Ghost present in the Church to lead it into all truth.

Hence the acknowledgement of certain books as inspired by the Holy Ghost did not mean, and does not mean, that the inspiration of the Holy Ghost is limited to the canon of Scripture, and that after the close of the canon the Holy Ghost had nothing more to say. On the contrary, apart from Him the Scripture can never be rightly understood ; and the Holy Ghost always has fresh things to say, in each day and generation.

Why, then, should the canon of Scripture ever be closed ? Why should not fresh books be added to Scripture, in succeeding centuries and now ? Because with the apostolic age the divine Purpose of salvation, which had begun with the redemption of Israel from Egypt, was now complete ; and of that divine work the Scriptures are the record. That work had begun with the divine action whereby Israel had been constituted as His People : it had continued with the discipline by which He had educated them in the knowledge of Himself and the way of His spiritual service, and which had culminated in the passage of Israel in the Exile through a death to a resurrection, and the announcement of His future Messianic salvation by the exilic prophets ; and it had been consummated when the promises were fulfilled in the advent of the Messiah, the work of the second redemption, and the opening of Israel to people of all nations. After this a new stage begins, namely the acts of the Holy Ghost in Church History, not now in one nation only, but in all the nations as they are baptised into Christ.

Therefore all nations, and all individual Christians, need the Scriptures of both Testaments. If for instance Indian Christians were to say that for them the true preparation for Christ consists in the Hindu Scriptures, not only would they be depriving themselves of the only possible key to the understanding of the New Testament, but also they would be substituting for the authentic conception of God given in the Old Testament a set of pagan conceptions derived from the Hindu writings. All nations need the whole Bible.

Two inseparables

Which then comes first, the Bible or the Church ? The answer must be that the two can never be separated. The Bible can never be rightly understood apart from that tradition of the Israel of God out of which it arose. The books of the Bible are not being read as Scripture when they are studied purely as literature, or as sources for the study of comparative religion, or to throw light on the ancient history of the Middle East. They are read as Scripture only when they are read, as they are read in the Church, for the same purpose for which they were written, namely to learn the ways of God and to hear His word. Further, the whole Bible presupposes the existence of the Israel of God, which is the Church.

On the other hand, apart from the Bible and the living word of God spoken through it, the Church becomes hierarchical and sacerdotalist in the wrong sense, or worldly, or pietistic. The Bible is there to recall it to the acts of the living God, and where the Bible is shut out, the Church lacks the well-spring of life. The healthy life of the Church absolutely demands that the Bible be read, taught, preached, meditated upon, and obeyed.

Catholics and Protestants assign different emphases to Church and Bible respectively. But because in truth Church and Bible belong inseparably together, the existing divisions of Catholics and Protestants are not irreconcilable ; for their different emphases are really complementary.

The Necessity and Function of Higher Criticism

Oscar CULLMANN

The controversy about exegesis raised a storm of excitement after the publication by Karl Barth of his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, particularly between 1920-1930¹. Since then there has been a certain silence on the subject. However, at last, and fortunately so, it has begun to come up again.

The writer of these lines himself took part in the first debate by publishing an article in 1928 in the *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses*². It was at that time above all things necessary to support Karl Barth in his defence of the legitimate scientific nature of "theological exegesis" — a term by the way rather unfortunate — in opposition to the tendency then in vogue to consider that only philological and historical exegesis were scientific ; and to show that the philological, psychological and historical interpretation of a text was only partial and that any scientific exegesis which was worthy of the name must not stop there. We made an effort to prove that, while based upon historical, psychological and philological considerations, serious

¹ See the prefaces to the second edition of K. BARTH'S *Römerbrief*, 1921, and to the third edition, 1922. See also among others, R. BULTMANN, *Über das Problem einer Theologischen Exegese des Neuen Testaments* (*Zwischen den Zeiten*, 1925, pp. 334 ff.) and the controversy E. BRUNNER-L. KOEHLER in Nr. 27, 29, 31, 32 and 36 of the *Kirchenblatt für die Reformierte Schweiz*, 1926. E. v. DOBSCHÜTZ, *Vom Auslegen des Neuen Testaments*, 1927 ; E. FASCHER, *Vom Verstehen des Neuen Testaments*, 1930 ; F. TORM, *Hermeneutik des Neuen Testaments*, 1930.

² See *Les Problèmes posés par la méthode exégétique de l'Ecole de Karl Barth* in R.H.P.R., 1928, pp. 70 ff.

exegesis must always be concerned to shed light upon the different theological ideas contained in the Bible, and it must pass beyond the circumstances in which these were expressed.

In order to achieve this aim we must not limit ourselves to establishing the relation of these ideas to the writer who formulated them, or the epoch which gave them birth ; they must also be considered absolutely and by themselves. For example, if we seek to understand some Pauline conception such as justification by faith, it is not enough to look for the psychological motive behind the idea in the personality of St. Paul, or in certain circumstances of his life, nor yet to determine the influence of Judaism and Hellenism upon the development of the apostle's thought. Such a process, however indispensable, cannot begin to tell us anything about the intrinsic and objective truth contained in the idea of justification by faith. A commentary on the Pauline epistles, which was limited to the study of such questions, would only shed light on the apostle himself. A genuine and complete interpretation must go much further and must try to develop *in modern language* the objective ideas expressed in the text.

Studying the truth for itself

The Pauline text aims at communicating to us an objective truth which has validity not only for the apostle, but for all men. It is essential that we should take this aim seriously and study the truth for itself ; in this manner giving proof of true *scientific humility*, while also respecting the *a priori* of all historical study — that is to say, that a writer long dead and regarded as outside the historical plane has something to teach us which we did not know before. A naive "historicism", which thinks it can "understand" a theological text from antiquity without laying aside historical and philological preoccupations, assumes that we are endowed with previous knowledge about the

objects of all theology, — a knowledge which might be called normative and which is never modified by any additional evidence from the side of the authors who are being studied. In this way considerations which were purely archaeological, philological or psychological would suffice for the understanding of a classical text, because all we should have to do would be to establish historically what the prophets, or apostles, for example, had written, and because we were already in possession of a complete solution of the problem *in advance* which we had obtained in a lordly fashion and quite independently of the text before us.

This naive lordliness is wholly opposed to any sound scientific method whether in reference to the Bible or to any other document. In the realm of the Christian Church, which claims to base its knowledge of God on the Scripture, it is most markedly obvious that such an attitude to biblical texts is impossible. Such an attitude could only be based upon an impossible *a priori* which would enable us to understand, and hence to judge, the theological ideas of the prophets and apostles thanks to knowledge which had already come to us in another way. It would therefore be sufficient, in order to understand what these ideas were, to remain wholly confined to the domain of history.

In our 1928 article we indicated that the same is true of all studies of the past. For example, the interpreter of the *Pensées* of Pascal cannot withdraw either to a position which is exclusively historical. It is not enough for him to know the historical details of the life of Pascal, the influence of Jansenism and of the polemic against the Jesuits on the evolution of Pascal's thought, nor yet to grasp the lines of his character by a psychological study. He must attempt to penetrate to the very subject which Pascal wished to express.

The writers of the philosophy of history and of music find themselves *mutatis mutandis* faced with a similar task. The historian of music who studies the works of Bach, of Mozart, or of Beethoven is certainly

doing the work of a historian, and yet it is not enough to emphasise in the work of these composers the influence of the setting in which they found themselves, or the circumstances of their life or their genius. It is not even enough for him to be familiar with the technical operations which were used in their age. He must also himself be a musician and able to reach the objective reality which these composers expressed in their work.

After the first world war, the majority of those who specialized in biblical exegesis were subject to such deterioration professionally that it became necessary to insist upon these rather elementary truths which are self-evident in other domains.

Our debt to the nineteenth century

However, it seems that the moment has now come to defend the necessity of philological and historical criticism and to underline the great value of Higher Criticism for the understanding of the Bible, thus doing justice, while using all necessary reservations, to the debt of theology to the nineteenth century.

The theological importance of the period up to 1914 is to be found precisely in the application of all forms of human knowledge to the study of the Bible. It is easy today, as we have just done, to point out the obvious errors made by the naive "historicism" of the period which was incarnate in the person of Adolf von Harnack (a man acclaimed by popular admiration and who personified scientific passion applied to such researches).

Where should we be today in our biblical exegesis — whatever our theological leanings — without the patient textual study of Tischendorf in Germany, or Wescott and Hort in England, their many rivals and their countless successors? Where should we be now if Wellhausen had not raised the problems of the literary criticism of the Old Testament, questionable though his theories may be? Or where should we be without the systematic study devoted by H. Holtzmann to the solution

of the synoptic question? Even to the school of "The History of Religions", which is perhaps overmuch decried today — to the work, that is to say, of Gunkel, Gressmann, Bousset, Loisy — we owe results which cannot be ignored in any sound interpretation of the Bible. In the more restricted sphere of the theology — in the real sense — of the New Testament, which is perhaps the particular inspiration of the generation which succeeded 1919, we must never forget our debt to Albert Schweitzer, however much we may have to criticise him for raising the question of eschatology.

The writer's experiences with students have convinced him that the new generation of students is often ready to pass judgment in a summary and essentially negative fashion upon all this philological and historical work. He cannot conceal his suspicion that in many cases the superficial lordliness with which some of them dismiss philology and history, which, they explain, are quite out of date as a means of unfolding the divine word, is ultimately rooted in the law of minimum effort. They make theological exegesis a pretext for passing as quickly as possible from philological study with its greater austerity, and its demands on their abnegation, to systematic studies. It would, however, be unfair to accuse all who depreciate philological and historical exegesis of laziness.

In other cases it is clear that we are meeting a pietistic suspicion of "secular" methods. Such students are not afraid of work, but are afraid to endanger their faith in the authority of the Bible. We shall see later on that this attitude involves a false conception of the nature both of biblical revelation and of the faith.

Finally a third type of student does not try to avoid philological work, nor the problems raised by biblical criticism. But even while he recognizes in principle the usefulness, and even the necessity, of philological and historical researches, he is tempted to stress their purely "preliminary" character; indeed he thinks that he can limit his study to delving into some commentary,

or some well-known dictionary in order to concentrate on the theological meditations inspired by the biblical text. He too is not aware of the close relation between philological interpretation and the theological interpretation of the biblical text.

We propose in the following pages to deal: first, with the theological basis which underlies a philological and historical exegesis; second, with the rôle of philological and historical exegesis.

1. THE THEOLOGICAL BASIS OF HIGHER CRITICISM

Anyone who underestimates the necessity and the rôle of philological and historical exegesis in the first place proves that he has a false theological conception of the nature of biblical revelation. In fact the very essence of the central affirmation of the Bible has to do with history. The biblical revelation in both the Old and New Testaments is a revelation of God in History, in the history of the people of Israel which found its achievement in the incarnation of Jesus of Nazareth and worked itself out through the history of the primitive community. The central message of this revelation is found in the New Testament, every book of which states as its end this fundamental and eminently theological confession: Jesus of Nazareth is Christ the Lord. But as soon as we speak of Jesus of Nazareth, we speak of history, and the history of Jesus presupposes a relationship both with the history of Israel and with the history of the primitive Church. To be sure this history is but, as it were, a very thin stream which flows within the broad river of world history. And yet this narrow path continues through the whole course of world history and cannot be detached from its background. Seen from the angle of world history (which we call secular history), biblical history — the history of the divine revelation — is of no significance and at the most represents merely a collection of news items, or events of local importance.

From the opposite angle, the history of the Bible claims to be at once a part of world history and the very norm which gives world history some direction.

The error of allegory

Thus in the theological affirmation which is at the foundation of the New Testament: "Jesus of Nazareth is Lord", history (that is to say Jesus of Nazareth) is itself the subject. In other words any "theology" in the New Testament is not only "related" to history, but is of the very essence of history. For this reason, it is wholly impossible to pretend to give an interpretation to the New Testament which can be called "theological", and which does not take account of history. Here lies the fundamental theological error of all allegorical interpretation, whether classical or modern, which purports to uncover the "eternal" meaning which lies behind the historical facts quite independently of these historical facts. For allegorical exegesis history is merely a symbol, behind which it looks for something else; whereas in reality history in its temporal progression lays before us the eternal salvation of man.

When Prof. R. Bultmann of Marburg in our own days seeks to rob the New Testament of its mythical character — which in other words we may call the history of salvation — (*Entmythologisierung*¹), his method of approach to the study of the New Testament is less remote than it seems from the allegorical method. To be sure, Bultmann takes the historical and philological study of the text very seriously. Unlike the "allegorists" he does not start off with an idea ready-made which he is determined to find at all costs in the text; on the contrary he deliberately begins from historical study. And yet he only uses history in order to rid

¹ See R. BULTMANN'S *Neues Testament and Mythologie. Das Problem der Entmythologisierung der neutestamentlichen Verkündigung*, in *Kerygma und Mythos*, Hamburg 1948, pp. 15 ff.

himself more easily of history, at least of the "history of salvation". His *a priori*, which he has certainly not drawn from the Bible, is that, in the New Testament message, the history of salvation is no more than a purely external shell, which could and should be removed from the New Testament writings in order to reach the very kernel¹. In spite of all differences, this *a priori* reduces the distance between Mr. Bultmann and the allegorists. In reality biblical history is neither the symbol nor the image, nor the mythological framework of "temporal existence". It is the "history of salvation" and as such stands in a double relationship to secular history; on the one hand, the latter is its background² while, on the other, secular history is wholly determined and judged by the criterion of biblical history.

In this relation, is any distinction to be drawn between the historical and the didactic books of the Bible? It may be thought so, but the distinction is really only an apparent one³. In reality the didactic books, that is to say the writings of the prophets in the Old Testament and of the epistles in the New Testament, are equally in the last analysis directed to the revelation of God in biblical history. On the other hand, the so-called historical books of the Bible always have as their own subject the particular history of the eternal salvation of man. Now, since in the Bible theology is a history and this history is the essence of theology, there is clearly no means of drawing a fundamental distinction between the historical and the didactic books. The theological

¹ The historicity of this biblical kernel is recognised by BULTMANN, but just not in the meaning of the biblical *oikonomia*. We are surprised and regret that BULTMANN, as he says himself in his critical study of our work *Christus und die Zeit* entitled *Heilsgeschichte und Geschichte* (*Theologische Literaturzeitung* 1948, Col. 659 ff.) has not seen the distinction which we made between world history and the history of salvation. As long as he does not see that the New Testament speaks definitely of a divine *oikonomia* which concerns a temporal succession of events — not the "temporality of existence" — it is to be feared that our discussion will have no very satisfactory result. See further on note ³.

² Note the mention of Emperor Augustus, Luke 2 : 1, and that of Emperor Tiberius, Luke 3 : 1.

³ We laid too much stress upon this distinction in our article of 1928.

reasons we have given and which explain why biblical exegesis, in accordance with its theological aim, cannot get on without historical interpretation, have validity in one group as in the other.

The word became flesh

This theological necessity is seen still more clearly when, setting aside the essence of the biblical message, we come to the nature of the *transmission* of this message. The divine revelation was given form for us at a definite moment of history and by means of men who belonged to their own age, and who used a human language which was spoken in that age. This transmission — human as it is — partakes, precisely in its temporal and humanly imperfect nature, of the essence of the great biblical truth. In revealing Himself to men, God became flesh. The process by which were shaped the particular books of the Bible, and later on, the canonical collections of the Old and New Testaments, was an ordinary historic process and yet is itself an element in the revelation. Indeed in its very ordinariness, it is part of the divine revelation. The Word became flesh, and this truth applies equally to the compiling of the Bible. Starting from this point we realise that, if we despise the purely historical study of this process for the accidental and human character of its expression, we are in danger of falling into a heresy as old as Christianity: docetism. For the docetist the incarnation of the Divine Word, which is the subject of the Bible, is not real, but only apparent since it would be unworthy of God that He should take a material form.

The witness of the apostles has not reached us in a form, the divine nature of which would strike our senses as miraculous. If it were so, faith in the Divine Word would not be the faith of which the New Testament speaks. Real faith inevitably presupposes the "scandal of the Cross". This is faith in Christ. "Can any good

thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1: 46.) "Shall Christ come out of Galilee?" (John 7: 41.) This is faith in the Church, the Body of Christ, which from the very first hour was made up of sinners. The human way, with all the element of "scandal", in which the books of the New Testament were written and the canon constituted, is the necessary "rock of offence" which God desired, and on which alone true faith and the divine inspiration of the Bible could be founded. Within this process, containing as it did all human defects and every kind of secular influence, the Holy Spirit was at work, so that the Word of God might be revealed to humanity. This is faith in the "inspiration" of the Bible, so long as the "scandal" is not removed. Let us think of this "scandal": that we have four different narratives of the life of Jesus, two of which at least do not even come directly from the group of the Twelve and which do not agree with each other. Let us think of another "scandal": that for the whole New Testament we have different manuscripts of which the texts do not harmonize and which sometimes, as in Galatians 2-5, teach two precisely opposite lessons! From the beginning efforts have been made to hide that particular scandal just as they have been made to hide the scandal of the humanity of Christ and of the imperfection of the members of the Church. We have shown elsewhere¹ how the gnostics tried to set on one side the scandal of the plurality of the gospels by substituting one alone. The theories of the *verbal* inspiration of the Bible in the strict sense of the word show the same preoccupation.

If God designed the human form in which the Holy Spirit transmitted the Divine Word, and if this transmission is itself an element in the history of salvation, we must, if we would hear the Word of God in the Bible, understand this form both in its process of evolution and in its fixed characteristics; must, in other words, pass through historical and philological study.

¹ *Die Pluralität der Evangelien als theologisches Problem im Altertum*, an article which appeared in 1945 in the *Theologische Zeitschrift*, pp. 23 ff.

2. THE RÔLE OF HIGHER CRITICISM

If we say that philological and historical exegesis consists "in applying a preliminary study" to the theological understanding of the text, we have not precisely defined its task. Its rôle is in reality a triple one. In the first instance, since biblical theology is seen as essentially a "history of salvation", the theological exposition of texts should bring out in many cases a historic linking together of the facts of the past, the present and the eschatological future. In the second place, historical and philological exegesis should define and describe the human and accidental *setting* within which the biblical revelation has had to show itself at a given moment of history and in the world situation where the writers found themselves. In the third place — and we would chiefly insist upon this point — the aim of historical and philological exegesis is to control the numerous ideas and suggestions which a text brings us and to remove from the interpretation those which do not bear examination.

Taking history seriously

On the first point we must emphasise that we are not attempting to make use of history just in order to set it aside later on. "Jesus the Christ", the centre of the biblical message, has to do with history, as we have said before, and must be bound up with both the history of Israel and the history of the apostles as well as of the birth of the Church of Christ. Although here we are speaking of a very *particular* history, a biblical history¹, it is none the less *history*. If we are to take

¹ When BULTMANN, in his article *Heilsgeschichte und Geschichte* quoted above, says that he does not see how far the meaning of the word "history" is different for us in the two phrases the "history of salvation" and "universal history", we can only answer that the difference has no effective bearing upon the historical character of facts which are common to the two kinds of history, nor yet upon the temporal character of the connection between the facts, but only upon the choice of these facts and the perspective in which the N.T. sees them by reason of the central place occupied there by the death of Christ. *Mutatis mutandis*, it is a case of the same relationship

seriously its theological importance for man's salvation we must also take the historic process seriously and realise that it expresses itself in both theological and historical categories. For instance, we shall not take out of the history of Israel all that really makes it a history, but we shall show how the conceptions of election and substitution, thoroughly theological as they are, are yet realised, in biblical theory, through this self-same historical evolution.

History is not in this case a sort of puzzle in which our task is to discover something different from what it really is, that is, just the history of Israel, which does not so far teach us anything about Jesus of Nazareth as a historical person, but rather leads up to the consummation of history in His Person. If we seek faithfully to pursue this line of consummation we must not turn it into allegory, nor yet break up history into different isolated stories which can only find their true meaning outside the framework of the history of Israel before Jesus Christ. Rather we shall bring out the historical sequence into the light of day, so that the divine plan (what the New Testament calls *oikonomia*) may become evident not *behind* but *within* history itself.

We have pointed out elsewhere¹ that the writers of the New Testament saw all this history, which was centred in the death and resurrection of Christ, unfold according to a principle wholly different from that of modern historiography. And yet, if we are to be able to see the succession of certain facts in this plan of salvation, we must learn how to combine with theological thought a historical viewpoint which presupposes both

which exists between universal history and the choice necessarily made among the *data* of that history by a certain "philosophy of history" which looks at everything from a particular angle. The comparison is an imperfect one, but it does bring out the fact that, to be a "biblical history", that is, a very restricted history seen with a peculiar perspective, the history on which the New Testament tells us our salvation is based, is none the less a real history and one, in consequence, to which historical categories must be applied.

¹ *Christ et le Temps*, Neuchâtel et Paris, Delachaux et Niestlé, 1947, pp. 13 ff.

a knowledge of the facts and the capacity to link them together in a definite perspective. In other words, if we are to see the line which leads from Israel to Christ, and from Christ to the Church, we must be both theologians and historians.

Defining the human setting

It should be an easier matter to find an agreement among modern interpreters with regard to the second function of historical and philological exegesis. We have seen that the biblical revelation was transmitted in the language and ideas of the time and through the human personalities of writers whose individual characteristics influenced their work. Here we must first of all refute an attitude of mind which is dear to the upholders of the liberal view, that we find in the Bible side by side with truths which are valid for all time, others which are adapted to the ideas of the period. Now we must emphasise that biblical texts as a whole wear a dress which belongs to the time of their writers. The external aspect of the biblical message is wholly adapted to the ideas of the period. We cannot say that in one passage the Holy Spirit is speaking through the writer while in another it is only the writer who speaks as a man of his own time.

In fact the Holy Spirit can only speak in human language, and that language must always bear the stamp of the period and of the individuality of the biblical writer. For this reason philological investigation, historical research and any knowledge we may possess of the setting in which the writer lived, or the circumstances of his life, help to provide us with a "transparency" through which, by an effort of theological concentration, we may see *with* the writer the truth which he saw and *with him* may attain to the revelation which came to him. We must thoroughly understand this historic "transparency"; our vision through it must be so clear that at any moment we may become the actual contemporaries of the

writer. Thus it depends upon the understanding which philological and historical methods provide that this "transparency" of which we speak should cease to be an obstacle and should begin to be the means of approaching the theological examination of the truth.

We must not dismiss the weight of any science which is auxiliary to history: philology, archaeology, papyrology, textual history, literary criticism of sources, secular history, the general history of religions and psychology all have their value. Surely after what has been said we need not insist upon this. Let us however say a word about psychology. In our day by a natural reaction against certain exaggerations, or obvious abuses, psychology is eliminated, perhaps too thoroughly, from exegesis. Yet it is not wholly irrelevant to know, for example, in what circumstances of his life the apostle Paul wrote such and such an epistle. Here again we must take seriously the fact that revelation has come to us through the channel of a human personality, nor is it irrelevant for the study of the Pauline epistles that we should learn from the Book of Acts the chief stages in the life of the apostle. While we are on this subject we must observe that, if the question of the authorship of a certain biblical writing is no longer of such overwhelming importance as it used to be, it is at least of value in helping us to understand the text. To take an example: if it were true, as the Catholic Church insists, that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written by St. Paul, then exegesis, in order to explain this, should refer to the other Pauline epistles more thoroughly than it would have done had there been nothing in the theory.

Perhaps it may be supposed that as regards the study of the language and other influences of the time upon the text to be interpreted, historical and philological exegesis is really only of a "preliminary" nature. But in reality it is not enough for exegesis to use all this necessary knowledge merely *at the beginning* of its task in order thereafter to have a free course in its theological research. There must always be a continual interchange of results between historical study and theological

penetration, so that each may enrich the other. For this reason the critic must be both historian and theologian. A division of work can only be an impediment to the *interior dialogue* which must be held continuously between historian and theologian.

Controlling theological interpretations

We shall understand this still more fully if we look at the third function of philological and historical exegesis. It would be a great mistake to believe that the ordinary believer, who has no historical knowledge, could not in some direct method grasp the thought of the biblical writer. He can often understand the revelation at the basis of the text by a direct intuition which is wholly adequate. To speak theologically, the Holy Spirit, who has been at work in the prophet of the Old Testament, and the apostle of the New, can work in the same manner in the believing reader and so reveal to him the "wisdom of God by the Spirit" (I Cor. 1 : 18 ff.). In certain cases, the reader may, as it were, jump over the intermediate stages through which exegesis has necessarily to pass, in order to avoid the obstacle caused by the human setting of the revelation. Frequently, the reader may, through the inner witness of the Holy Spirit, avoid the roundabout road of historical study. If this were not so, we should have serious reason to doubt the scriptural principle on which the Christian life is based.

None the less the biblical critic is called to interpret the Scripture through his own particular training, and is bound to follow the straight and narrow way which we have sketched out for him. This is all the more necessary because the biblical word which we may either approach directly, or else through philological or historical study, arouses many and varied ideas in the reader. The apostle's advice to "search the spirits" must be equally applied to the interpretation, which is to say that the interpreter must subject his own ideas to the severe control of the Scripture. The critic, who has a real gift for the theological understanding of a text — I mean the *good* exegetical critic — is exposed, more than

mediocre critics, to the danger that he may introduce into his interpretation ideas which are not in the text. Here then the very *greatest humility* is necessary in the commentator. The critic faces his severest trial when theological ideas spring up all round him, meet, get entangled, conflict and are combined. At the peak of his spiritual joy as an interpreter he meets his greatest temptation, the temptation of the critic.

At this point, and in all cases, philological exegesis is indispensable, both to control the theological ideas suggested by the text and to eliminate those which are shown by study to be alien to the text. Here the scholar must regard his own personal discoveries with a pitiless eye, however seductive they may be. From this point of view the critic is asked to display a higher degree of abnegation than any other scholar, for he must also resist the temptation to bring two texts into harmony when their affirmations do not agree, if he is convinced that such a synthesis is incompatible with the critical control exercised by philology and history; this he must do, however admirable the synthesis may seem to him, and however painful the biblical antinomy with regard to one point or another, once the synthesis has been rejected.

Any future historian of the theology of the twentieth century ought, we feel, to emphasise at the outset that it is the century of theological exegesis. It must be admitted that biblical critics are more conscious today of their particular task: that of explaining to the modern world as faithfully as possible the theological purpose of all biblical texts. It is not mere chance that this century has given birth to the great project of the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament published by G. Kittel. Karl Barth must always be remembered with gratitude for having raised implicitly in his Commentary on the Romans the problem of exegesis — whatever reserves some of us may have about its contents. This commentary has reorientated exegesis as a whole by calling it back to its aims. It

would be wholly unjust to rebuke the writer of it for underestimating the efforts of the philologists and historians who have worked on the Bible, or for dismissing the results of their work ¹. It is, however, the third rôle of historical exegesis — by which I mean its function of control — which he seems somewhat to have neglected in some of his interpretations. It is perhaps true that no critic can boast of having subjected his finest discoveries to such control, those at least which have given himself most joy. But it seems to us that Barth is particularly open to this danger, not only because of the richness of his thought, but because systematically he seems to treat philological and historical explanation as too exclusively *preliminary* in character.

For this reason we have not stopped in these pages at justifying historical and philological criticism in a purely general fashion. We have tried to be more precise in emphasising that it must never be considered as wholly a preliminary work. It must rather accompany exegesis *from its beginning to its end*.

The great and unique responsibility of biblical exegesis is to be faithful to the text in a radical manner, even if the exegetical result of this is but modest and may perhaps at first seem useless for either the dogma or the practical life of the Church ². Philological and historical interpretation have a high calling: to help the biblical critic to fidelity to his task, and to keep him from overstepping the precise and narrow limits which the Church with justice demands of him.

¹ We hope that the regrettable affirmations of the preface to the last volume which has appeared of *Kirchliche Dogmatik* (III/2), 1948, pp. VII ff. on the work of the exegetists, discarding as they do the sane attitude taken up in the preface to the second edition of the Commentary to Romans, do not represent the writer's last word on the question, whatever disappointments the critics have caused and will still cause him.

² When BARTH speaks, in the preface to Vol. III of the *Kirchliche Dogmatik* of "dogmatic responsibility" of the exegetist and implicitly reproaches the critics for ignoring it, accusing them of "*ahnungslos in die Landschaft hineinzureden*", he does not realise that the responsibility of the critic is simply to confine himself to his own limited task. It is only by observing this restriction that he will do a service to the dogmatist.

Has the New Testament superseded the Old ?

JAMES MUILENBURG

The question is as old as Christianity. As the early Christians became increasingly aware of the newness of their religion and of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, the Old Testament became a problem. After all, it was the sacred literature of the religion from which they had broken away. The gospel was new, and the law belonged to the old Israel. Why bother about the ancient Law and the Prophets and the Writings when all that one really needed was the gospel ? The gospels and the letters of Paul obviously appealed much more to the rising Christianity than the ancient traditions which belonged to the things that had passed away. There were Christians who took this view, some of them men of standing and intellect and character. Yet the decision finally went against them, and the Old Testament was retained, although one is tempted to add, for the wrong reasons.

The Old Testament *is* a problem. What are we to do with the many passages which reflect the ethical standards and religious conceptions of a primitive time ? We are all familiar with such passages : David's satisfaction of the laws of blood revenge against Saul's children, the holocaust of cities and the destruction of every living thing, the dishonesty of the patriarchs, and even the questionable actions of Yahweh the Hebrew God. One could multiply such instances. Surely these are all superseded in the New Testament. Nevertheless, this is a too simple and thoughtless solution of the

matter. For one thing, the Old Testament itself supersedes these "primitive" elements. Moreover, it supersedes them in an especially effective way because it meets them "head on" and comes directly to grips with them. It establishes contact with them and makes clear why they have been superseded. Again, anyone who really knows the Old Testament knows that it is absurd to focus upon passages like these. They do not belong to the main stream, and if one is going to concentrate on the limitations of Scripture he would have to confront a similar problem in the New Testament.

Yet Christianity did represent something new, genuinely and profoundly new. This is an insight which comes through faith, but not through faith alone. A study of the Old and the New Testament must reveal to any unbiased mind that the New Testament is different from the Old. But again I wish to insist that this emphasis upon "newness" is itself derived from the Old Testament. By its very nature Hebrew religion was always becoming "new", and we are not playing with words when we say that. Who that has read the Bible does not know that Amos is new, that Jeremiah and Second Isaiah are profoundly new? It is Second Isaiah who is above all others interested in this matter of "newness". If one would really wish to witness the living reality of the meaning of something "new" in history, then he had better spend time with this the greatest of all the men of Israel. One might suggest that after all Amos and the others have their roots in the Hebraic prophetic tradition, that they are men of Israel and belong to a heritage of which they are acutely conscious, and that they are all witnessing in their own way to the reality of the unique relationship between Israel and her God in the covenant relationship. This would be indeed an admirable "suggestion", for few things are more important than to say precisely these things of Jesus himself and of his followers. To say this is not to deprive the "new" revelation in Christ of its newness; on the contrary it is to make clear for the

first time the interior setting of Jesus' life and thought and ministry and to understand him in relation to the whole of his past. Jesus is first of all a Jew, an authentic son of Israel, and his life and work must be understood in terms of the community to which he belonged and in relation to which he understood himself and his work.

The two testaments

The Christian Bible is divided. It has two parts, the one is called *old* and the other *new*. Both are called "testament" (an unfortunate word, by the way!), i.e. *covenant* book, and it is obvious that both must be understood as *covenant* books, even though the word may have become somewhat archaic in our modern vocabulary. The two divisions of Scripture must be read in relation to each other. That is the way in which Christians, at least, may derive most profit from them. To be sure, the Old Testament may be read by itself not only with enormous profit but for the indispensable light it casts upon one's personal and social life and upon one's understanding of the meaning of history and human relations. Judaism reads the Old Testament by itself, although not completely so, for Judaism sees the movement of the faith in the direction of the great corpus of the *Talmud*. But what I wish to stress is that the movement of the Old Testament is towards the future. Its expectations are even more dynamic than its memories. Now Christian faith sees this future toward which the Old Testament moves in the New Testament, in the literature which centers about Jesus the Christ. There are many things which are not resolved or completed in the Old Testament. Christian faith sees them resolved or completed in the New.

The New Testament, on the other hand, cannot be read by itself. It was not written that way. It was written *in relation*, in relation to the life and literature and faith and hope and worship of Israel. The attempts to understand the New Testament by itself have been

responsible for its corruption and its misunderstanding. This kind of "isolationism" is alien to the whole New Testament. It reaches back to the beginnings, it grasps the whole of the Great Tradition, and weaves out of it its understanding of Jesus of Nazareth. We read the New Testament in the light of the Old because the New Testament itself leans upon the Old. The presuppositions of the New Testament, by and large, are embedded in the life and thought of ancient Israel. Many of the common statements about the uniqueness of Jesus' view of God and similar subjects are simply untrue. Or if one sees in the New Testament a great stress on the love of God and on man's answering response to this love, he would be greatly rewarded if he would turn to such books as Hosea, Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, and the Second Isaiah to observe their great contributions to this central reality of our faith. Again, if one is deeply moved by the Christian emphasis upon forgiveness, he can only profit by turning to some of the penitential psalms (e.g. 51, 130) and Second Isaiah. This is not to say that there are no differences between the two testaments. Of course there are. Nor are we maintaining that the two stand on precisely the same level. Whether one is loftier or more profound than the other is in a way beside the point. The two testaments belong together, but they are two testaments, not one. As two testaments, they must both be read, and read *in relation*. For if the New Testament is a "fulfilment", it goes without saying that it boots us little if we do not understand that which is "fulfilled". Easy generalizations which we are unable to fill with content will not do much to fortify our faith or make it any more persuasive and convincing.

What the literature of Israel can do for us

An examination of the concrete materials of the two testaments shows even more clearly how much they are both needed. Take, for example, the Book of Psalms,

the devotional literature of the Bible *par excellence*. The confessions, aspirations, and conflicts of the soul are recorded here. How poor we should be without the twenty-third psalm ! How poor we should be without the twenty-seventh, the forty-second and forty-third, the forty-sixth, the seventy-third, the ninetieth, the ninety-first, the one hundred and third, the one hundred and thirty-ninth, and many others. They are incomparable not only in their grandeur and beauty, but incomparable because there is nothing in the literature of the world which can really match them, either in the New Testament or anywhere else. Who is there among us who knows his Scripture who has not found the fifty-first psalm a perfect expression of penitence ? Who could of himself say it so well ?

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness :
According to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my
transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from
my sin,
For I know my transgression, and my sin is ever before me.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean :
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow,
Make me to hear joy and gladness
That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

Create in me a clean heart, O God ;
And renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from thy presence ;
And take not thy holy spirit from me.

Such an utterance was written in a particular time and a particular place by a particular person, but it has broken the barriers of time and place and speaks to every man who knows himself. Perhaps, someone will be prompted to protest at this point (someone usually does !) that after all there are the bitter psalms of revenge, the so-called imprecatory psalms. I have

three things to say about this : (1) how many of such psalms are there ? (2) have you ever read through these psalms ? and (3) would you be willing to throw them out ? I for one should lament the omission of Psalm 137, and it is among the "worst". At the risk of being misunderstood, I should even add that I am glad that it is there, for I know so many people in my generation, who have suffered very much more than I have suffered, who in the hour of deep torment and persecution have been tempted to cry out very much in this way. We may not defend such brutal words as vv. 1-9, but we can understand them. It has been said again and again that the Bible is a human book. It certainly is realistic. If it were only pious, how trying it would become ! If it were all of one contemplative mood, how we should surfeit of it ! If it were all of one *genre* or kind, it would be a great classic and nothing more. In the Psalter we meet all kinds and conditions of men in every kind of mood and circumstance, and most of us are ourselves persons of every kind of mood who confront many kinds of circumstances. To raise the question as to whether the Old Testament supersedes the New is fruitless. The Psalter is the devotional literature of all Christians. In hours of sorrow and despair and bereavement, in hours of temptation and loneliness and the sense of the futility of existence, it comes to us for our healing and cleansing and restoration. This is not an attempt to praise the psalms. The record of experience and history speaks for itself ¹.

What the Psalter does for the devotional life, the history of the Old Testament does for an understanding of the meaning and significance of human history. For history is always read in terms of its meaningfulness. It is always dominated by purpose. Therefore social and economic and political issues are never of only minor importance. They are important because they are always related to the purpose behind history. Moreover, the human community is always a present and

¹ See ROWLAND E. PROTHERO, *The Psalms in Human Life*. Everyman Series. New York, 1903.

dynamic factor in the life of men. The great events of the world, the conquests of Assyria and Babylonia and Persia, the rise of fresh vitalities in history, the declines and falls of nations are always taken very seriously. For behind these events there is meaning and purpose. Israel is always asking the historical question, and is insistent that the events are speaking to her, that God is Himself active in the events. In the event His word is spoken. Perhaps these general remarks do not carry much force. But when one confronts a situation in history like the year 885 or 722 or 586 or 538 B. C., like 1200 or 1000 or 444 B. C., the matter lies somewhat differently. For we ourselves are living in a generation and in a world where events are exerting terrific pressure upon our lives, and we are all of us compelled to take serious account of them. And for this, there is nothing in the literature of the world which can do more for us than the literature of Israel. If the New Testament finally can do more and does do more, it is partly because we read it in the light of the whole history and the understanding of history which lies behind it.

I have chosen but two main areas of Old Testament revelation for our purpose. But what shall we say of the great prophets who spoke to their own times with such trenchant force and compelling conviction? How do they understand their times? What of the wisdom writers, especially Job, who grapples with the problems of suffering and pain and the righteousness of God in such titanic fashion? What of the stories of Genesis, even in all their primitiveness? I have a friend who says that if he might choose only one book of the Old Testament and all the others were to be destroyed, he would choose Genesis. This may be a mistaken or and exaggerated judgment, but anyone who has read and pondered these stories would agree that he probably understands what is there. For who is there among us who has read the story of the man and woman in the garden in Genesis 2 : 4b-3 : 24 who does not know that

he is there, that it is in reality his own story ? Or who is there among us who has heard the words to Cain, "What hast thou done ?" or "Where is Abel your brother ?" who does not find his own conscience deeply stirred ?

Our understanding of Jesus as Christ

Finally, of course, we come as we always do sooner or later to the question of Jesus Christ. But who is this Jesus of Nazareth whom Christians confess to be Christ ? What does it mean to say "Christ" in relation to Jesus ? It means to say something momentous concerning him. Yet we cannot really understand what this momentousness is without the Old Testament in which the word and idea of "Christ" was born and nurtured and defined. When we stand before the Cross and ask ourselves what the meaning of this suffering and death is for us, it is natural that we follow the early Christians and see in the supreme poem of all Scripture, Isaiah 52 : 13-53 : 12, the authentic answer. Yet behind this poem lies the whole history and life and thought of Israel. When we sing of the Cross at the Eastertide, "all the light of sacred story gathers round its head sublime", something lies behind our words which is more than fervent piety. It is an accurate expression of how Christian faith understands the Cross in the light of the whole tradition from its beginning to its culmination. According to the Gospel of Luke, when Jesus returned to Nazareth and visited the synagogue, he turned to the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah, and after he read the account of the Servant's mission, he said, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your ears".

Thinking Biblically Today and Biblical Thinking

J. C. HOEKENDIJK

Even the gloomiest prophecies about the present and future state of our "*post-Christian*" world cannot deny the simple fact that our thinking is in some way biblically conditioned. We cannot get away from this fact.

Strictly speaking there is no such thing as a "post-Christian" era. For there is no other end of the Christian era, which was inaugurated by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, than His second coming. In this period, in which we live now, even Antichrist is at home, as the Bible clearly states. He also stands in the shadow of Christ. And even secularism, detested as it is, does not fall outside the limits of this era. As a matter of fact secularism is only conceivable and possible in the shadow of the Cross.

We had better try to correct our terminology in still another respect. There has been much talk about *neo-paganism*. Has not this been a misunderstanding? This paganism also has shown clearly, in more than one respect, that neither was it new, nor could it be pagan. It could not get rid of Christ, and therefore had to develop into a systematized anti-Christian religion, thus proving that it had not succeeded in being post-Christian.

In the period of history wherein we are situated, Matth. 12 : 30 has absolute validity : "He who is not with me is against me." And in all this time Christ

will not be a *plus-quam-perfectum*. He stays with us as our contemporary, urging a decision. Our era (A.D.) is a continuous reminder of this.

The biblical heritage

Nor can we speak of a *post-biblical* era, as has been suggested — in the sense that all traces of the biblical message are completely wiped out. Our whole history and even our perplexing contemporary society, prove the contrary. We witness there the continuous struggle for the biblical heritage. In the years marked A. D. nobody succeeds in being *un-biblical*. Everywhere he will meet fragments of biblical ideas, even when these ideas are integrated in a system where they are arrayed against the total biblical message. The real marxist, for example, lives from social prophecy and stands perhaps closer to Amos and Micah than he himself, or his opponents, are willing to acknowledge. Our contemporary utopists try to interpret old messianic desires for the Kingdom of God. The nihilist lives — as Berdyaev so often reminded us — by the misunderstood first half of that old Christian prayer “May this world perish” (and Thy Kingdom come). And in spite of all its care to secure religious neutrality, UNO is based on an ideology in which different biblical ideas are presupposed.

Everywhere around us we find those traces and reminiscences of the Bible. They have so often become part of our own flesh and blood, that they cannot amaze us any longer. The crumbs that fall from the biblical table are so ubiquitous that many of us have accepted them as if they were the real bread. And therefore a man may imagine that he is thinking biblically as soon as some of the well-known keywords are mentioned in his arguments, for instance when the word “democracy” is spoken, or the holy inviolability of human personality is proclaimed or — more than anything else — when

an ideology of human liberty is propagated in some way or another.

This is the beginning of our distress as Christians. We cannot set ourselves free from all those words and ideas, which swarm about our heads and hearts, and therefore we do not recapture surprise at a *new* message, nor alarm at the utterly impossible news proclaimed in Scripture. Everyone of us is in some sort busy with "biblical thinking" — even though it is mostly in an unconscious way (e.g. our concept of history), and this is exactly one of the reasons why it is deemed unnecessary and undesirable — a nice job for theologians! — to indulge in what thinking biblically really could and should be. With our worn-out words and thumbbed-over ideas — those crumbs which have fallen under the table and are *not* meant for the children of the house — we are content. Our ears are half-shut and we fall into a reverie about the old and well-known words.

The three dangers to Christendom

Perhaps it was with this situation in view that Luther warned Christendom of three dangers which might corrupt it completely: "Three things will corrupt Christendom: the wisdom of this world, a desire for security, and forgetting the benefits received in the Gospel." These words might be helpful to find our way from all our fixed sets of "biblical" ideas to what thinking biblically really does mean.

The wisdom of this world

None of us would be prepared to proclaim the wisdom of this world without taking up in his argument a few biblical elements. These may adorn his trend of profound thought and serve to make it all acceptable.

As soon as we pay attention to the function these biblical ideas perform, it will be clear what is meant.

Take a simple example. It has become a fixed tradition now to summarize our message about man and his rights in the biblical message of the concept of the image of God. "Not only equal rights, but the much more comprehensive notion of justice which claims equality for all who bear the human form, because equality is due to man as man — that notion is built on a foundation of faith. The doctrine of the *imago Dei* is the fundamental principle of the Protestant doctrine of justice" (Brunner). The consequence of statements like this will be that many of us will feel safe in biblical thinking as soon as we find a basis for the equality of all men in a reference to those first pages of Genesis where the creation of man in the image of God is mentioned.

When we look more closely two things may become clear. This biblical reference very often and very easily comes to have only a symbolic meaning. It has no decisive function in the argument, but very often tends to become a mere shibboleth in a purely humanistic argument, in which the equality of man has to be defended (from other very different presuppositions). Very often it only serves to legitimize one's thinking as "biblical thinking", so that a stamp of authority is put on the argument. The wisdom of the world has annexed this biblical concept for its own use.

When we try to think biblically we are puzzled by the fact that these majestic words about man are very seldom repeated. In the Old Testament only a few references are made to this equality of man, as the consequence of his being created in the image of God (cf. Job 31 : 13 ff., especially v. 15 : master and slave ; Prov. 14 : 31 ; 17 : 5 ; 22 : 2, rich and poor). Further on the Old Testament is silent about the image of God. Other concepts come into view which are of more decisive importance, e.g. that it is not self-evident at all that man should have life, but that he only may continue to live as long as God does not withhold His word (Ps. 28 ; Deut. 32 : 47, etc.) ; or that in God's offering of His word he may have a chance to choose between life and

death. Because God approaches him and his fellow-man with His word, there exists a fundamental equality and unity, based on a solidarity which is not founded primarily in creation, but in this offer of salvation.

Biblical thinking or man's design ?

Only this synoptic approach, in which the entire scriptural message is listened to, is legitimate. But the wisdom of the world is not prepared for this. It adopts only such ideas as are in agreement with its preconceived ideas and in this way it usurps the biblical message. Everyone of us realizes that he is permanently doing this himself ; and he knows how easily he can continue to do so by isolating single words and texts out of the total context, that is by neglecting the place and function these words have in the whole of the biblical message ; by using these words as a motto or a shibboleth, a hook to hang his ideas on ; by filling them with different content. We may be sure that in this connection we always try to climb up from our thoughts (which remain basic !) to Scripture. For instance when God's Design and Man's Disorder are in question we, with our wisdom of the world, take our starting point from a shrewd analysis of human disorder and afterwards try to climb up to God's design. In *our* opinion "biblical" thinking comes in here ; but it is most probable that we shall only arrive at man's design, beautified here and there with biblical references.

It will, in this connection, be a test of our desire to think biblically, whether we are ready and prepared *to listen first*, to try to discover the surplus-value of the biblical words. If we do, we may be preserved from annexing these words for our own use and integrating them into our wisdom of the world.

That is a difficult and surprisingly rich task of self-criticism. The biblical words are worlds of meaning with a series of connotations and a rich variety of prospects. The word which we usually translate "peace"

(*shalom*) has connotations of integrity, community, harmony, justice. "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and justice shall look down from heaven." (Ps. 85 : 10 ff.) This all together is *shalom*. In trying to discover this synoptic and comprehensive meaning of Bible words, in refusing to have them too directly and too one-sidedly translated into our own vocabulary, but rather accepting them in their rich variety, we may correct our desire to draw up a system of biblical thinking. This variety is a sign that these words do not belong to our world and may not be grasped by the wisdom of this world. To think biblically means at first that we recognize this and therefore try to enter this world of scripture, without being disturbed and haunted by our own preconceived ideas.

The desire for security

A desire for security may be a second cause of corruption for Christendom. We need not think of others for we all have in our hearts an irrepressible desire for security and also an inclination to fundamentalism, which tries to bring order into the disturbing variety of problems by reducing them to a fixed set of stable ideas which cannot be doubted.

In face of the Bible, this desire for security becomes so unbearable that we try to fly to the safety of "biblical thinking". We try to imitate and copy precisely what we hear. Even our language tends to become the "language of Canaan". All our questions have to find a definite answer. A code of ethics is constructed, where we can without too much trouble read the ready-made paragraphs ; or a synopsis of world history, beginning 23 October 4004 B.C. at 9 o'clock in the morning (the date of creation according to Prof. Lightfoot) is drawn up, wherein all details are fixed so precisely that we are safeguarded against any painful surprises in the daily

papers. We may deride this sort of biblical thinking and yet take part in it ourselves in a less obvious way. The fundamental issue here is that our biblical thinking becomes a bastion of safety against our own doubts but at the same time it becomes a bastion of security against the God of the Bible. He has lost His liberty and sovereignty ; He is bound to our rules of the game. In the last resort we have only words over which none but *we* can dispose. God proposes, man disposes : *that* is security. Nothing unforeseen can happen. All riddles have been put beyond our system of biblical thinking.

The all-important condition of entering the world of the Bible is neglected here, and therefore the way to thinking biblically is barricaded. We have to enter the world of the Bible in all our own human insecurity, overburdened with our questions and problems as we are — to meet the *Deus loquens* whose *verba* are set down here and to have these words spoken to us once more, if He is willing. Instead of coming armed with our security we enter this world counting only on His promises, asking whether He will fulfil them and reveal Himself, not as dumb idols (Ps. 136 : 15 ff. ; Jer. 10 : 1-5), but as a speaking God, “Thy servant heareth”.

This is the opposite of security. Everything rests in God’s hands and we go forward ourselves in the darkness of our insecurity. We possess nothing, God “disposes” fully... “Make me to understand the way of Thy precepts... Teach me, o Lord... Give me understanding... Make me to go in the path of Thy commandments...” (Ps. 119.)

It is a path of danger and of risk to ask for an encounter with Him, before Whom we cannot exist ; to expose ourselves to the “invading” will of God in submission to His judgment. And therefore this way is impossible so long as we *forget* the benefits given in the Gospel.

The forgetting of divine benefits

The Bible is a book we can only take in our hands if we remember: these are the Scriptures that bear witness to Jesus Christ (John 5 : 39). This should be remembered and this means that Bible reading is a work of expectancy, full of hope, founded on the remembrance of the benefits given in the Gospel.

Thus only may we be safeguarded from our systems of biblical thinking. Remembering always means meditating on God's great acts (Ps. 77 : 12 ff.), not forgetting how He "performs His word" (I Kings 12 : 15) which is not "vain and empty" (Deut. 32 : 47) but will accomplish that which God pleases, (Is. 55 : 11), until the Word happens (John 1), the promises are fulfilled, and salvation is prepared in Jesus Christ. There is a dynamic here, driving to the centre where Jesus Christ stands. He is the centre and the hidden content of Scripture. After Christ the only thing the apostles could do was again to "remind" men of the great acts of God. The apostolic preaching is a recital of the divine events, in which the given benefits are remembered (Acts 2 : 22 ff., 10 etc.).

And just because one is told not to forget the benefits of the past, this preaching points to the future. Jesus Christ whose benefits are recited is also "our Hope" (I Tim. 1 : 1). "Our help in ages past" Whom we remember, is "our hope for years to come".

In this remembrance the words and concepts are put in their real context, they are taken into the activity of God, Who again and again fulfils His promises and in every fulfilment puts again the seed of a new promise that points further on. For this reason "remembering" is much more than recapitulating what happened in the past. It means to be always fully and attentively aware of the fact that we have here to do with an acting God Who reigns in sovereignty over His world and lets this word "happen".

Honouring the living Lord of Scripture

When we really try to think biblically today we need to meditate on these three words of Luther. That will mean practically that we shall have to be content with much less than any system of "biblical thinking". It is not given to us to make such a biblical system whole in itself. It might be interesting — usually it is ! — but it is almost inevitable that the wisdom of this world should make the frame for it, and the desire for security is too active in filling up this frame. As soon as we project a biblical theology or "biblical ethics" we fall into the temptation of shutting off the actual words, spoken by the *Deus loquens* Who alone can make this book alive, this Bible which is an inexhaustible source-spring of faith. And almost inevitably we land in the midst of paragraphs and we hide the speaking God behind His words.

Thinking biblically — if it is to mean anything at all — will be that we try to share with prophets and apostles in their encounter with the Lord of Scripture ; share their remembrance of God's great acts and their expectancy and hope. In this actual encounter our path is pointed out, if God will. We are kept back from forgetfulness and our eyes are open to His benefits. Here and there a signpost is placed, or a limit is drawn, but there will always be so much free room and so many problems will remain undecided that we cannot take one step without the Holy Spirit directing our feet.

Is it not true that we are only preserved from a certain bibliolatry and the tyranny of a "paper pope" when thinking biblically means — from beginning to end — to honour God who did not want to be a dumb idol, but Who willed to be *Deus loquens* as the Lord of Scripture, and to listen so attentively and submissively until out of His *verba* His voice sounds forth ? "Hide not thy commandments from me, for I am a stranger on this earth." (Ps. 119 : 19.)

An Eastern Orthodox Bible Study

PAUL EVDOKIMOFF

I. INTRODUCTION

When an effort is made to decipher, read, or understand a subject, it is never possible to be entirely free from preconceptions, for so-called "objectivity" is unreal and does not even exist on the plane of pure science. A scholar is, after all, a human being with all his personal reactions which play an essential part in his scientific vision; even if he is unconscious of this fact himself it is an important element in his choice between hypotheses. It is always possible to see through the most objective thinking to the underlying stratum of belief, even, and perhaps above all, if the man is an atheist.

The Bible in the Church

All analysis of a scientific or exegetical kind presupposes its own special premises.

The attitude for instance of an Orthodox to the Bible is determined by what we may call the Orthodox *a priori* in all Bible reading. This *a priori* works in two ways: on the one hand it makes it clear that man can only listen to God from within the Church and thus when he takes up the Bible, the *a priori* sets man and the Bible side by side in the Church; on the other hand it gives rise to a discernment which can steer its way through the mass of hypotheses and reaches a clear perspective from which all free research of the Truth can take place.

The Bible is given to the Church. The Church receives it and fixes its canon; wherefore the Bible can never be taken outside the Church without immediately marring the relationship

between man and the Word of God. God wills that the Word should form a body, should itself become the organism and the place where His words are heard. So it is in this place that we must hear them, it is in Christ that we must read the Bible.

It is in this way that the *a priori* is seen as the degree of life in the Church — which denotes not a spatial relationship, but the particular quality of the understanding and the experience of life. It is the very structure of the spirit which is modified by communion with the body.

Just as the Bible does not teach the natural immortality of the soul but its resurrection, and that man is the member of a whole and is raised from the dead by the power of that whole which is Christ, even so the true subject of knowledge and of truth is not man as an isolated unit but man as a part. It is this peculiar quality of relationship (which finds its origin in love) which becomes the fundamental basis from which all approach to knowledge is to be made.

In the last resort it is the Church which reads the Bible as soon as its pages are opened, and the degree of my receptivity of the Spirit is a function of my authenticity in the Body. Even when we read the Bible alone, we read it *together*. The daily liturgical reading at once sets what is right in its true register and consecrates it. We immediately find ourselves in the universal spirit which preserves us from all individualistic pietism and all narrow sectarianism, which makes us royally free from ourselves.

The Bible in the Tradition

The liturgical world is a setting of the Bible in dramatic form; iconography is the theological vision in line and colour, the rich lifeblood of the meditations of the Fathers of the Church. All these organic parts of the Tradition create a world essentially dynamic. The Tradition is the principle of identity, by means of which the Church down through the ages has always recognized its own identity. It can only do this because it is the witness of what endures and it is just this fact of its orientation towards eternity that gives the Tradition its dynamic and creative power.

Through forms which are already determined it takes a prophetic course towards what is ever new. Our part is not to seek for answers which were completed in the past, but rather to drink from the fountain and so to develop an *instinct* of Orthodoxy which may lead our steps into the consensus of the Church, permitting us to read the Bible within its Catholicity and in this way to continue organically the efforts of the councils and of the Fathers. Each Bible reading is done in the Body. We read of Christ together. The Church is the total Christ; the Word in the person of Jesus Christ in all His divine-human fullness and the Word as words of Christ which He pronounced in the course of His life on earth — this all necessitates the setting of the words in the context of the person of Christ. Because the Church is the place and expression of His total presence, it becomes clear that it is He Himself Who through all the different voices of the Church is expressing His own words in integrating the Here and Now with the Beyond, the Past with the Future, the One with the Many.

It is our task to purify our understanding, constantly to perfect our spiritual and scientific channels of receiving, to remove from the sacred stores of Tradition — magnificent treasure-house of the words of God — all transient and disturbing elements and restore it to its pristine purity to listen to Christ.

But, except in the narrow field of the dogmatic statements of the Creed and of the Ecumenical Councils, the Tradition is of an essentially spiritual nature. It possesses no formal criterion, no external organ of power. It is from within that it leads to evidence as to what is Orthodox and to what is hetero-Orthodox. This explains the great freedom of the Orthodox councils; but this freedom is the achievement of faith and of fidelity to *quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est*, understanding this affirmation in a vertical and collective sense which points to what is above Time and the Many.

This shows us that whatever light shines upon me as I read the Bible does not belong to me, does not come from my reason but is the light of the Church; hence the importance of my being grounded in its mystical experience. The voice of the Church sounds in the Spirit which binds its members into one Body and it is there that Love discovers Christ.

Our attitude to study

1. Let us begin with one or two practical points. When we have a passage to understand we must first set it in the context of the book and of the Bible and of the Church. Each part of it must be considered in the light of the whole. At the same time we must discover the accent which the author himself puts on the passage as well as its logical place and its cause. If there are parallels with other passages we must catch the difference of the ideological illumination. The liturgical use of a passage often adds a valuable precision — for example the tenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians is read during the office of the Theophanies of our Lord, and Romans 3 : 11 to 14 : 4 is the lesson for the First Sunday of Great Lent.

2. The only unchanging criterion is this : whatever is opposed to dogmatic truth must be set aside, for example any idea of the brothers of the Lord as the children of Joseph and Mary contradicts the dogma of the virginity of Mary and must be considered as false, while the understanding of John 14 : 28 in the sense of subordination is contradicted by the principle of the equality of the three divine Persons. Any conception of the Son of God as the “Child of God”, in the sense of the universal sonship of all men, is in conflict with the Christological dogma of the Only Begotten Son.

3. On the other hand in the realm of historical fact our freedom is great and we may use all the discoveries of science. Even if the text has many variants and several ways of interpretation are possible, still the wealth of its contents will always overwhelm human understanding.

The problem of authenticity of certain texts and of attributing the writings to such and such an author does not involve us in any difficulty, and texts which probably do not belong to the “primitive canon” (as for instance Mark 16 ; John 7 : 53, 8 : 11 ; John 21 ; Romans 15) are accepted as variants on the original text and are sanctified by their place and their liturgical uses.

4. Finally let us mention the distinctive characteristic of Orthodox exegesis : its double perspective at once historical

and meta-historical. Every fact narrated in the Bible is a historical fact which has had its place and its moment in history, while at the same time it always possesses a symbolic sense; it is a sign that spiritual scope passes beyond the reason of mere history. The liturgical communion of prayer with Adam or Lazarus is a concrete experience, an encounter which prevents the dissolving of their personality into the realm of symbol, and at the same time the liturgical office of their Feast reveals their super-historical significance. Adam is the universal man and Lazarus is the prophetic anticipation of the Resurrection. For the Fathers of the Church the Old Testament was both concrete history and at the same time the prefiguration of Christ. One comparison may help the reader to understand the relation between the two perspectives. A religious painting traces a historic reality in a realistic manner, while an icon, by its inverted perspective, its "antinomic" lines and forms, reveals the spiritual structure of that reality, its ideal "schema", its silent depth.

Looked at from one point of view the books of the Kings and the synoptic Gospels are history, and the books of the Chronicles and the Gospel of St. John are meta-history. The Orthodox exegetical attitude lies in the unbroken equilibrium between the two perspectives; it turns from the figure to contemplate the icon.

II. A STUDY ON THE UPPER ROOM IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

In order to get a better idea of the Orthodox way of reading the Bible, we are now going to take for study the brief episode of Judas in the Gospel of St. John (13: 18-30).

1. Let us first of all look at the context of the passage, on which precious light is thrown by the chief characteristics of the Fourth Gospel. In the synoptic Gospels the spiritual scope of events frequently goes beyond history, but with John meta-history dominates without question. John completes the history of the synoptics, crowning the edifice with a heavenly cupola where the peaks of the mystery of that divine life are lost — in the primordial unity of Father and Son.

Even the empirical details of John's narrative, down to the very counting of the hours of the day, have an imprint which is not of this world. These hours are not timepieces but are the moments of light and of darkness. We move in this world but are not of it; there is height and there is depth, with rifts that open upon another dimension. Eternal life begins here below and the constant interpretation of it gives transparency to history and to time.

Instead of chronology John marks a succession of events in a symbolical sense in which the empirical contours are dimmed. The life of Jesus has no beginning (Birth) and no end (Ascension). We feel the prologue lying behind the entire extent of the Gospel. John speaks of what lies before history and above history; the New Birth breaks a way out of this world into the world beyond. Mankind enters by the Door, drinks from the Well, eats of the Bread of life and walks in Christ. As in the story of the Man who was born blind, the light, by the simple fact of being there, makes the scales fall from our eyes enabling us to see through history. The *Parousia*, image of eternal life, is continuously reproduced, it is inwardly present to the point of making each instant of history eschatological, of catching a glimpse, at every moment, of the judgment of time. Iconography represents John by an eagle, which means that it is his rôle to look at the sun, to reach that stratum of universal destiny, where opposition is left behind and all things meet, where evil is overcome and the Son is already glorified.

2. The double ending of the Gospel (chaps. 20 and 21) shows that the final vision of John rests on his testament. It is he who marks the perspective of our passage; the background against which the figure of Judas is cut out is what truly remains — the Church. Chapter 20 is indeed the conclusion of the Gospel. It ends with the objective of faith which leads to eternal life (20: 20-32). But there is a postscript; Chapter 21 is the final word on the Church.

By the road of Love (*agape*) Peter is re-established in the intimacy of friendship (21: 15-18); there is inexhaustible riches in the play of the words *agapao* and *phileo*. It is communion of this kind (*philia*) which constitutes the essence of the Church. By the unity of Christ and the Holy Spirit, which man reflects

in his own nature by existing with other men and by laying himself open to it, he enters into filial communion with the Father and thus from within, by his attitude to his neighbour, that is his brother, he enters from the world into the Church. Nevertheless men follow the roads along which He calls them. The mystery of Peter is the mystery of the faithful who follow Him (21 : 18, 13) out of time. "Follow me", the mystery of John is the insertion into time of that which "endures" (21 : 23). The liturgy of the Feast of St. John catches in an admirable way the mysterious link between the destiny of John and that of the Church, the destiny of finding oneself on the border of two worlds and of being at one and the same time in both. John is "the peak of the apostles, the organ of theology... he who leaves the earth is he who remains on the earth". The same office emphasises the intimacy of John with Christ. He is trusted who preserves in his heart the words of the Christ. It is for this reason that the action of Judas stands for him in strong relief and in close relationship to the destiny of the world, of those who go out and who remain. Let us always keep in mind the splendid background of that scene : the Church gathered in the Upper Room, the whole illuminated by the Love which carries the world and against which the hand of Judas is outlined.

3. Still more immediately our passage is inserted in the farewell words of Jesus (chaps. 13-17), this gospel within the gospel. Everything which precedes helps us to rise to this great and final consolation ; the undoubted presence in the world, right up to its end, of the two Comforters, who, from then on, are indissolubly united and are weaving the eucharistic reality of the Church — that communion beloved of the Church (14 : 23 ; 14 : 16, 21), where the Holy Trinity has Its dwelling.

4. Chapter 13 sets us straight at the heart of the eucharistic mystery without John's narrating it. This manner of enshrining facts is part of his genius (John 3 ; Matthew 9 : 11, 14 ; John 5 : 8, 9, 14 ; Matthew 9 : 20 ; John 10 : 24 ; Matthew 18 : 12-13 ; Luke 15 : 4-7). The ethics of the history of the synoptics rise in John towards the divine unity, towards the love between Father and Son in which the new human reality is granted. This shows us that the institutional words of the Lord's Supper in

the synoptics correspond to the "new commandment" of John (13 : 34), "as I have loved you". It is the love between Father and Son which is the focus of the communion between Christ and man, between man and man ; as Paul said "I love you with the bowels of Christ". What is new is the Person of Christ who is "in the midst of two or three". His presence impersonates, integrates and unfolds itself in the eucharistic rite. In John, however, by contrast with the synoptics, the "new commandment" puts the accent on the Supper as indwelt, received, lived and prolonged in life and projected into the world. Man becomes the place of the Holy Communion, the Communion of the Church on the march, in action and facing the world. It is for this reason that on the very threshold of the Gospel of John we find the miracle of the Marriage at Cana as a eucharistic prelude (the water and the wine) "my hour is not yet come" — the hour which comes when from the side of Christ there come forth blood and water (3 : 14 ; 19 : 34), while the washing of their feet is a prelude to repentance, which leads the disciples into conformity with Christ and prepares for Communion.

5. The Holy Communion — just like the Kingdom of God, which is both to come and is also already here — follows and precedes the Cross. That which is already in eternity may also arise in time and before the limits are set (7 : 39 : 13 : 31 ; 17 : 1). "Everything is accomplished" dominates time ; "now" (13 : 31) at that very instant breaks through and fulfils all things. We must seize the immensity of this "now". The Holy Communion represents in fact the whole Christ. The whole Christ is the eucharistic Christ ; the accomplishment of God-man, God-humanity unity, the accomplishment and fullest expression of the mystery of the Church. In this act incorporation takes place : man becomes a member of the Body of Christ : "As there is only one bread we who were many have but one body". (Compare Mark 5 : 9 ; "many" in the answer of the man with the unclean spirit shows the action of evil, the breaking up of the original unity of man into "many", into Legion, into an evil multitude of isolated elements which are plunged into infernal solitude). The action of Christ has the opposite effect, it integrates and recapitulates and forms the Body anew.

6. "Now" the hour is come" (17 : 1). Before the appointed time this is already the balance sheet of history and John sets it in the framework of tragedy. By means of self-contradictory contrasts all through the Fourth Gospel we watch the rapid increase of radical opposition between light and darkness (8 : 23 ; 9 : 39 ; 12 : 48 ; 15 : 18-19 ; 17 : 14 ; 18 : 36). To emerge from this conflict man must be born again (3 : 3), and find himself in that which already exists (12 : 31). The tension between the two opposing poles reaches its climax in our text and that is the meaning of the episode of Judas. Notice the transparency of time : "The Lamb sacrificed from the beginning of the world" (Revelation 13 and 8) appears as its Source. That is why before His self-sacrifice "under Pontius Pilate" He can give Himself to nourish the Twelve, to incorporate them in His own substance. The Christ is Jesus *and* the Church. In this prelude it is already the Banquet of which the Revelation speaks ; the Kingdom of God already dominates the world (13 : 31 ; 17 : 10), His light fills the Upper Room. The genius of Rembrandt shows us Christ recognized in the breaking of the bread (Luke 24 : 35), and the light which shines on the faces of the Apostles is the Christ. Everything reflects the Bread of Life. Everything *is* already the Christ and His light manifests the opposition between the two worlds.

7. No hand stretched out towards Christ remains empty (13 : 26) ; Judas is still one of the Twelve, he is still within the circle of light, within the warmth of the Communion. Judas holds out his hand. In laying the eucharistic bread in the hollow of that hand (this is the opinion of Ephraim, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustine and Jerome) Christ sent forth his final appeal to evil, to the night at the highest point of its darkness ; this is the last stage of the offering (12 : 32 "all mankind"). The fingers of Judas closed on the Lamb that was slain but what was decisive was his manner of receiving and partaking. Can darkness reabsorb itself, melt into light ? This vast question remains unsolved.

8. The eucharist is a realised communion, someone enters and takes his abode. The invitation to open becomes an act. Its eucharistic nature is clearly seen in the words "Satan entered intohim". (Notice on the sacramental plane that at the moment

of his ordination the priest receives in his hand the piece of eucharistic bread which he keeps in his hand until the moment of communion). The choice is made, the bread of life is turned into the bread of death (Matthew 32 : 5). The terrible die of human liberty is cast and that is why it is said "What Thou doest, do quickly" (13 : 27).

9. On the one side is the Upper Room full of light. Life is here. The Source is strangely near. On the other side without it is night, the "outer darkness" of the parables. The Church is face to face with the anti-church, the world stands between. The episode of Judas ends with a tiny detail of infinite significance in the Johannine perspective. Judas went out and "it was night".

In the narrative of the creation of the world (Genesis 1 : 3-5) God creates light and not darkness. Darkness remains outside as though it is beyond light. Night does not enter into the act of the divine creation and the "evening and the morning were the (first) day". The evening and the morning marked the passage of time, the straining towards the brilliance of noon. (On the icon called *Sophia* the solar figure of Christ is seen in the middle and the purple of *Sophia* (wisdom) — *Sophia* represents the universe on its way towards its transfiguration, while the purple is the promise and the announcement of the white light of high noon). Night appears with the Fall, the potential darkness is made manifest by mingling with what exists, bringing with it the breath of the Void.

Judas passes out of the circle of light and night receives him, wrapping him round as if it were the one element to which he belongs, hiding the terrible secret of his communion with Satan. Satan is in Judas as Christ is within each apostle. Two dwellings are established among men, two communions of a eucharistic nature are achieved. But Judas carries in his hand, which is also the hand of Satan, a terrible mystery. The anti-church keeps in its bosom the pure offering, the eucharistic piece of bread, an operation of light, for is it not an expression of the word "the light shineth in darkness" a great hope, a great question which is never answered.

10. But our context contains still another question (13 : 20) of primary importance for us. This importance is underlined

by the repetition of "verily, verily, I say unto you", and by the trouble which Christ felt as it is mentioned in verse 21. As it passes from one pole to the other, from the Church to the anti-church, the glance of Christ stops between the two, is arrested by the world. The vision interrupts his talk and verse 20 brings a striking break. In reality it is not a break for the verse is in close connection with the episode of Judas. It explains in words Christ's gesture towards Judas and reveals its universal significance; but now it is the Church "he that is sent" (verses 16 and 20), which represents the hand of Jesus — more precisely what is in the hand of the Lord. This symbolical gesture of Jesus indicates the final mystery of the Church: the Church is the eucharistic bread offered to the world. The call to communion addressed to the world as the sphere over which the Prince of the world reigns.

11. Verse 20 is perhaps the most solemn word addressed to the Church. The great consolation in chapter 14 explains that the departure of Christ is not of this nature. Christ departs to return again. Even Saint Cyril of Alexandria explained that the return of Christ is made in the Holy Spirit. The two Comforters (14: 16) are inseparably united, and this day of return is the day of Pentecost. "I am with you until the end of the world." The person of Christ is real and the same as it ever was, only His form is changed. Christ no longer *faces* man as during His earthly life, but He is *within* man, and that is why communion is in the nature of a consummation.

Henceforth the presence of Christ is essentially the eucharistic presence. Faith discovers it and the word announces it. We see here the extent to which the Church is incorporation. Man once converted, born again, is incorporated and enters into communion and into friendship (15: 15), he appears in the image of the vine (15: 5). The minister of the word is completed in the minister of the sacraments in the eucharist.

And so the destiny of the world, its salvation or its destruction, depend on the attitude of the Church. If the world, if man, our neighbour, receives one of us, he is at that moment with "those who are sent" and that in itself is communion with Christ and in Him with the Father. The face of the Father stoops over the world and its arms, the Son and the Holy Spirit, embrace it.

12. Verse 20 fills us with joy, but also makes us tremble ; to what grandeur, to what presence does it call us to be "received" by the world ? Do we understand what Paul did when he refused his own salvation in order that his people might be saved ? Is our witness love of the world, the love which saves ? There is here everything that theology can teach in the perspective of repentance on the condemnation of the world, on justice and punishment, on hell : "Cain, where is thy brother Abel ?" There is everything that the mystery of the Church can teach us in the light of the priestly prayer (Chap. 17), "Abel, where is thy brother Cain ?"

Chap. 17 : 26 lets us see the uninterrupted current of love which flows between Father and Son, between the Son and man and between man and his fellowmen ; by its very nature this love is already a true participation in the divine life and is directly from the first moment a free gift. In the First Epistle of John (4 : 10) the love of God is spoken of "at the beginning" as an objective value, transcending every human response. His love is the dominating power which covers and resolves all discords. The two Comforters came not to judge but to save. Love appears in its depth, wholly disinterested like the joy of the Bridegroom's friend, the joy which is self-sustained, which is like pure gold and the light of the sun, a joy which is *a priori* for all man. In John (14 : 28) Jesus asks His disciples and His friends to rejoice with an exceeding great joy — although its reasons lie beyond the understanding of man in the objective existence of God. It is in this limpid joy and in the call to enter into it that the salvation of the world lies, and the call of verse 20 invites our human nature to discover the means of being "received", "welcomed" by the world. Paul had found this out when he said, "It is no longer I, it is Christ which liveth in me". Christian violence takes the Kingdom of God by force. It does this by taking the world by force in introducing it to communion with the Father. Now sermons are not enough. It is the historic hour when Christ must be shown forth, when the world must become the place of His presence, must become Christ. Chapter 17 : 20-21, 23 show the gradual movement of concentric circles ; first the apostles, then those who believe by their word — the Church — and finally the *world*. Communion ;

the Upper Room opens, its walls retire to the ends of the earth, it stands ready to embrace all, totality ; verse 21 of chapter 17 brings back the solemnity of verse 20 in chapter 13 — the fullness of the communion of the Church is not for itself but “that the world may believe”. It is in the quality of the living faith of the Church that the salvation of the world lies and here we mean the world in all its revolt and its opposition to God. God loved the world in its sin 3 : 16 and 12 : 32.

13. The light which is shed by chapter 17 on our verse 20 compels us to revise our ideas of the Church ; the classic definitions of our theologies have a strange way of always defining the Church as a function by itself. The Church is a unified assembly, nourished by the Word and the sacraments — this is a definition which is passive, static, acting as itself and for itself. If we study our context attentively with the aid of the *a priori*, we notice the universal meaning which reveals an unsuspected aspect of the Church, an aspect which is eschatological, in which a final hope for the world comes to light and an imperious call is heard.

The most adequate definition of the Church is given by Saint Ignatius of Antioch : “Where Christ is, there is the Church.” Now Christ came into the world for its salvation (12 : 32) ; therefore the Church must be defined in relation to the salvation of the world. It does not exist for itself, it does not even in the first instance exist for its members.

The Bride takes the form of the Bridegroom. She is the eucharistic bread. She is communion, fellowship. Her light shines through the darkness. It shines not only to give light but turns the night into endless day.

AN ASIAN TRAVEL DIARY

As I expected, my departure for Ceylon was sudden. A ring on the telephone towards the end of the morning informed me that as Geneva was in fog the aeroplane would not be able to land and that I would have to go in an autocar to Lyon. I had only two hours to finish packing, see that I had not left anything behind and say goodbye to my wife and children. In the end it was quite late at night when we arrived in a frozen condition at the airport of Lyon to climb aboard the plane which had come straight from New York. I wrapped myself shivering in a heavy overcoat which was to prove superfluous a few hours later at Cairo.

Contrasts in the Middle East

The journey was without incident as far as Egypt. A short stop at Rome, just time to drink a cup of coffee, then at dawn we flew over Crete, and I began to realise that for the first time in my life I was about to make the acquaintance of the East. The arrival over Egypt is striking : desert as far as the eye can reach, and then with almost brutal suddenness the green line of the Nile valley. The Pyramids could dimly be seen through the afternoon mist. We were seriously late by the time we landed at Cairo, a great misfortune, since both Egypt and Iraq were in a state of war and their territories could not be flown over after sunset. The T.W.A. decided that we should sleep at Cairo and I tried to make use of this unforeseen stop to make contact with our S.C.M. members in Egypt. From the aerodrome, we were swept off to the most luxurious hotel in Cairo, the Heliopolis Palace. Here we were comfortably settled, but were strichly forbidden to leave it, and police were watching at the door. However, I was able to telephone and a few hours later to my great joy several Egyptians whom I had met at Oslo, Amsterdam and elsewhere arrived. We were able to talk for a little about

all the difficulties of their work during this time of tension and the joy they were none the less able to find in the advance of Christian work in the University.

We were awakened at 4 o'clock in the morning, left for the aerodrome, passed through the customs, breakfasted rapidly and were off in the hope of reaching Bombay during the night. I was particularly struck by the crossing of the Sinai peninsula, a desolate landscape of cliffs and bare sand. Next the gulf of Akaba at the end of which four countries join — Egypt, Palestine, Transjordan and Saudi-Arabia : its waters are of a blinding blue, and amazingly deep. Everywhere were mingled strangely the memories of sacred history and the problems of international politics. I found myself dreaming of Moses and the Hebrew people wandering amongst the narrow and burning gorges of Sinai, and a few minutes later I looked down on the military territory where the rival ambitions of the great powers were in conflict. This is probably a salutary contrast which puts to flight any biblical romanticism ; for we must remember that Moses lived and journeyed in a world of great powers. The impression was similar at Basra where the aeroplane stopped for several minutes. Here were the waters of the Euphrates where the exiles sat and wept, but here also were the petrol wells of Iraq. Dhahran, our next stop, was at twilight merely an aspect of modern power, American camps, derricks and bare sand. The most desolate landscape I ever saw. Then came night and uncomfortable sleep. Then, in the middle of the night, the aerodrome of Bombay. A few hours later, at dawn, I climbed on to the aeroplane for Ceylon without an opportunity of making contact with Indian life either at Bombay, Hyderabad or Madras where I only saw the aerodromes which are the same in every climate.

Arrival in Ceylon

Finally, in the evening, we reached Colombo in the atmosphere of a Turkish bath. M. M. Thomas and Chandran Devanesan were waiting at the aerodrome to carry me off immediately to the Y.M.C.A. ; here we began at once to discuss the final plans for the Conference. I spent the night with Chandran's brother-in-law and had some most interesting political discussions with him. He plays an important part in the Trotzkyist Party which is more

important in Ceylon than the Communist Party and contains a good number of the parliamentary seats. We discussed political and theological problems for more than an hour, although I was dropping with sleep. Already I felt myself to be in touch with the Orient in its new revolutionary shape, at once so attractive and so dynamic. This discussion was more valuable and vivid than any similar conversation I was to have on my trip.

We had but a brief stop at Colombo and the very next day we left for Kandy which lies in the middle of the Island, among mountains and in a far fresher and drier climate. The Asian Leaders' Conference was about to begin. At first there were only about twenty leaders to spend two days of retreat in a delightful little college. Here we prepared ourselves both spiritually and technically for our talk during the Conference itself. I found many old friends amongst them: Kiang Wen-han, D. T. Niles, Gwennyth Hubble, C. S. Paul and others. M. M. Thomas made us work very hard and all through the Conference I admired the rhythm of an Indian conference. In Europe such a programme would produce a thorough insurrection among the delegates. We spent a larger part of our time in the college chapel built in the native Ceylonese style, that is, a mere roof supported on pillars of carved wood. Selvaretnam, the founder and leader of a Christian ashram in Ceylon, who was chaplain to the Conference, led us in prayer. We had long periods of silence and we met at the altar for an Anglican Communion Service, very simple and very beautiful, and open to all. There was work in plenty. Still we found some minutes free to admire the magnificent countryside of Kandy. The hills with their rich vegetation so green under a shining sky. I gradually became familiar with the Oriental setting, the wretchedness of the people, the picturesque dirt and the whole charm of this unfamiliar world. It is a little overwhelming to find oneself in a Christian college, fresh, clean and comfortable and see at a short distance the dreadful little huts in which whole families are crowded together. I also became familiar with the food. I was a little nervous about my first reactions to curry which had been so alarmingly described to me. But I found it simply excellent and shall miss it badly when I get back to the West. The food was abundant enough to cast into the shade the menus of any conference in Europe or America.

The Conference at work

At last the Asian Leaders' Conference began. There were a hundred of us representing the different lands of Asia, Australia, New Zealand and certain other parts of the world. We began very solemnly with a reception in a club in the town with speeches from the Mayor, the High Commissioner of the Government, representatives of the local committee and others. Happily these rather formal discourses were followed by remarkable Singhalese dances, very striking both for their artistic quality and their rhythmic perfection, indeed a wonderful experience both wild and fascinating.

The events in Indonesia naturally made a mark on the Conference. (There is an extraordinary parallel here to Oslo which began with Dutch action in Indonesia.) Two Indonesian delegates were present and naturally this fact laid the whole Indonesian question on the consciences of the Conference. These students were suffering cruelly from absence from their country at that period of crisis and the problem had to be faced as to what the Conference as such was to do. Some people wished to publish an official declaration for the press, but after long and serious discussion we decided that the wiser course was to address a letter to the N.C.S.V. in Holland, while at the same time expressing our sympathy with the Indonesian Movement itself. We spent long sessions in preparing the text of this letter to the students of Holland and, in the end, it did succeed in expressing the result of the deep and serious reflection of the members of the Conference as well as their real desire to face this political question within the circle of the Christian community and not before the public. Were it only in this respect, the Asian Leaders' Conference was enabled to make a real Christian affirmation to the world.

The Conference was clearly dominated by the question of evangelisation. All the Indians were obsessed by the growing aggressiveness of Hinduism and the necessity this laid upon every member of the Church, and particularly every Christian student, of being ready to give an account of their faith in courageous and explicit terms. The Chinese were faced with an imminent change of regime and with the expansion of Communism throughout the whole of China; while the representatives of the two countries of South East Asia in their anxiety to affirm their Christian faith in an almost wholly

hostile community — all were conscious that the task and the *raison d'être* of an S.C.M. must be evangelisation. Perhaps the question is at its most burning in India where Hindu syncretism is a severe temptation; and perhaps for that reason so many of the speakers laid special insistence upon the unity of Jesus Christ and of His Gospel.

But perhaps our most fruitful discussions were those in the groups on "How to Run an S.C.M.". Students discussed with passion the best way of organising a Bible study group, the aims of an S.C.M., the character of membership, whether open or closed, and particularly the need to base all their work upon prayer. A wholly new work is being organised throughout Asia and we must expect much from it. A particular responsibility rests upon the Movements in other parts of the world to support this effort not only by material aid, but also by prayer and by affection, and even perhaps by sending out to Asia workers, whether missionaries or others, who can give on the spot the support and the counsel to the S.C.M's at their tasks.

Asia expresses itself

But if Asia needs help from the West, it is also deeply conscious of its responsibilities and its possibilities. We spent some time in discussing the regional problems of Asia, and the five young movements of Burma, Indonesia, Malaya, Siam and the Philippines were the first to declare that they meant to form a group by themselves and to go forward with a common programme. The other movements mean to do the same, and all are conscious that in taking this step they are seeking not only to help themselves, but also to make a real contribution to the life of the Federation as a whole. While they discussed in the framework of the four main themes — Evangelisation, the Church, the University, Society — the general programme of the Federation, the delegates expressed their desire not only to benefit from all the work which has been carried out throughout the world during the last years, but also to contribute their own share to the general thinking of the Federation. In this respect, as in many others, I was struck with the extreme richness of Christian Asia today. Of the speakers to the Conference the most brilliant were Asian : Chinese, Indian, Burman. I felt that I was

taking part in an important episode in the life of the World's Student Christian Federation : Asia was becoming conscious of itself and for the first time was expressing itself. M. M. Thomas, who was the real architect of the Conference, for he had for more than a year devoted all his time, all his efforts, all his particular genius to it, gave it its essential character.

None the less the Conference was not the work of a single man. Far otherwise. I was greatly impressed by the admirable cooperation and the great initiative shown by everybody, even in small details. One of the most picturesque features of the Conference was the daily Bulletin, created from nothing by Chandran Devanesan. Every evening, Chandran went to sit down in the office of the Conference and, with the help of two acolytes, a typewriter, a roneo and unlimited quantities of coffee, produced round about midnight 2 or 4 cyclo-styled pages in which he succeeded with remarkable talent to give not only practical information about the programme, the gist of the chief speeches and discussions of the past day, but in particular, and with notable success, a humourous review of the events of the day. The morning reading of the Bulletin was the event of the Conference. I particularly enjoyed this atmosphere of jesting which reminded me of the French Movement.

The recreations provided were on the whole delightful. There was an excellent Christmas play got up by the Indian delegation with whatever scenery came to their hand. There were other exhibitions of Singhalese dancing most generously supplied by Bishop De Mel, several humourous revues, as well as an excellent review of the whole Conference on the last evening, and finally an excursion when we visited some of the curiosities of Kandy. Here again we were met by striking contrasts ; on the one hand we visited the Temple of the Tooth, a world-famed shrine of Buddhism. Here is preserved (so they say) a tooth of Buddha in a golden altar — the East in its most traditional aspect. From there we went on straight to the site of the new University of Ceylon. The Government of the Island had decided to transfer the different colleges and faculties gradually from the unhealthy climate of Colombo to this setting among the hills. An immense stretch of ground comprising several thousands of acres has been reserved for the new University and the Government has voted several millions of dollars to its construction. They showed us the first buildings and blueprints of the others. It will

be a very fine university in beautiful surroundings built in the local style, but with the last perfection of modern technical skill. It is typical to see the Government of this little island devoting such a large sum to its University. I got the impression that throughout the East the universities and the students have a meaning which is much greater than in our old world in the West. More than with us they represent the future and the State is willing to give an absolute priority to the development of education. The University appears to be at once the centre of training of an élite which is essential for the development of countries so newly liberated, and also the place where new systems of thought and a new civilisation are built up. After this glimpse of the future, we ended our excursion by a quiet walk in the National Botanic Gardens, the ancient Royal Parks, most impressive in their dignity and their peacefulness.

Ashram and college visitation

As I had twenty-four hours lee-way in my travel programme I was able to pay a short visit to D. T. Niles in his Northern parish on the shores of the Ocean. Here I had valuable hours of talk, some contact with the life of a local parish and in particular a thrilling visit to the ashram of our friend Selvaretnam. It is now ten years since this Christian community was founded and it was pointed out to me with pride that the foundation stone was laid by Visser 't Hooft, our Wim, who was then General Secretary of the Federation. When I arrived I was asking myself what an ashram really was and I was even a little afraid of discovering some manifestation of Indian mysticism which would be too difficult to understand for a Cartesian Frenchman like me. I was happily completely mistaken. The Ashram of Jaffna is a stretch of dry and poor land set in a beautiful landscape with a chapel, dwelling houses of great simplicity, a kitchen and no more. The community lives wholly on charity and its main object is to help all who are seeking an atmosphere of peace and of retreat, and particularly recent converts who have difficulty in adapting themselves to new circumstances. It is before anything else an organ of evangelisation.

But I had now to leave Ceylon for a rapid visit to India, and for the next fortnight I was to keep jumping from town to town

in an aeroplane without ever having the time for a long enough stop to make real and satisfying contacts. First I spent several days at Tambaram, the Christian college of Madras, which is so well known for all the conferences which had met there and in particular the great International Missionary Conference of 1938. Here I found Chandran Devanesan at home — for he is one of the professors — with a number of our Conference delegates, not to mention Winburn Thomas who met me at the aerodrome. Here there were many meetings and I spoke at a variety of colleges, groups and meetings. I was extremely interested by the extraordinary vitality of the Movement in Madras and its district.

I paid a visit to Pamel, where the Rural Service Squad (described in an article in the last Student World), carries on its magnificent work. Imagine a miserable little village which used to be a penitentiary encampment for a tribe of brigands. One day the doors were opened, the establishment broken up and the internees left to themselves. The Salvation Army worked there for some time and built a little school, then withdrew, possibly discouraged by the great difficulties of the task. Then the Christian students of Madras decided to attack the problem. Three students, two of them medicals, now live in the village in extremely primitive and difficult conditions. During the day they go to the University, but devote their evenings to caring for and evangelising that abandoned and despised community. Every day several students come voluntarily from Madras, or from Tambaram, to help them in their task. The former prison is in the course of being transformed into a dispensary. The old school is to be turned into a chapel. Medical help is taken to the villagers who stand in urgent need of it. Some elementary lessons are given to the children and the Gospel is preached in a very simple fashion. It is one of the most moving efforts I have ever witnessed. In the whole enterprise, the Madras students count only on themselves and their personal resources and you can easily imagine the difficulties of such a work of salvage in an isolated village several miles from the nearest railway station and which has no other means of transportation. I felt very proud, indeed childishly proud, although it was a very serious matter when I was asked to plant a tree at Pamel as a symbol of what the Rural Squad was doing in the framework of the Federation. The students of Madras were doing honour to the Federation and I felt very humble before them.

There were some excellent meetings with different S.C.M. groups. I particularly enjoyed conversations with the students of the Government College. They have to face Hindu hostility in the most direct manner and they often feel like falling into discouragement. It comforted them to hear that their fellow-students in Europe are often also faced with similar hostility and they asked me eager questions about the methods of organising an S.C.M. programme in a non-Christian University. This was an excellent moment of concrete work for us all. But more than the rest, Madras impressed me by its practice of prayer : every meeting of the group, and each of its activities, is prepared by a small group of volunteers in a simple prayer meeting. In this way the whole life of the Movement is as it were carried forward, guided and encircled by the prayers of its members and it was here that I found the explanation of the real power of a group which after all is small, poor and isolated.

The northern cities of India

I landed in Calcutta after Pandit Nehru and was immediately lost in an enthusiastic crowd. My whole visit was passed under the flag of Indian nationalism. The agnostic Nehru had come to receive in the name of the Government certain Buddhist relics which Britain was restoring to them, and also to open on the bank of the Ganges a shrine in honour of Gandhi. All the Bengali nationalist passion was unleashed and during the whole of my two days in Calcutta I moved about in the middle of an alarming crowd of shouting, joyful humanity. I stayed at the Scottish Churches College thanks to the untiring hospitality of Dr. Kellas who had already entertained a number of the delegates from Kandy as they passed through. Here, too, the same note was struck, for it was at this College that Bose, the Bengali hero and Gandhi's rival had studied a few years ago. I could only escape for several hours from the capital and its political frenzy in order to pay a visit to Serampore, the old college of William Carey, the first missionary to India, and attend a meeting of the theological students of the Seminary.

Allahabad was a remarkable contrast to Calcutta. After the burning heat of the great city, the banks of the river Jamna had a delightful freshness. The house of C. S. Paul which is also the

headquarters of the Indian Movement, was a dream of peace and harmony on the banks of the river within the campus of Ewing Christian College. Across the water could be seen the trees and buildings of the Agricultural Institute which is also a Christian foundation. The hospitality of C. S. and his family was generous and soothing. The atmosphere was one of tranquil unhurried conversation. Here I learned a great deal about India and its problems chatting in the shade of the great trees. I found there too several of the Kandy delegates and made a number of new friends both students and professors, and of course I talked. What else was a Federation secretary to do ? But the marvellous thing about these hours in Allahabad was that all the talk ended in a personal conversation.

I made my first acquaintance with Indian trains on the journey from Allahabad to Lucknow, and very comfortable I found them by my continental standards. C. S. Paul accompanied me and we arrived together in a Lucknow which seemed rather chilly. The university we found in a state of crisis : strikes, all kinds of rumours ; a woman student had been killed the night before by the police. There was excitement on all sides, but the Isabella Thoburn College where I was staying remained calm. It is a women's college but also a Christian college, wisely and firmly directed by Sarah Chakko. I was delighted to see her again : we had parted at the Amsterdam Assembly the previous summer, after taking part together in a radio broadcast. We had a long talk about the political and religious problems which face the churches and missions in India. I visited with her the remains of old Lucknow, the ruins of the Residence and the traces of the great rebellion of 1859, the monument of the nabobs, several temples. But, in particular, I saw the students, told them what their fellow students in Europe and America were doing, and spoke of our great missionary task, as well as of Kandy. The time was very short. I had lost my heart to Lucknow but I had to move on.

I very nearly was left behind at the Lucknow aerodrome. The aeroplane was overloaded with several passengers who were too corpulent and had too much luggage. However, we did finally, by one means or another, arrive at Delhi. How strongly reminiscent this administrative capital is of Washington — if in a different style ! Artificial and comfortable, clean and modern, is it a symbol

of the new India ? It is hard to say. At least it is a most interesting city, and not least in its remarkable proximity to that marvellous palace of the Moghuls, the Red Fort. I was the guest of the Anglican College of St. Stephen's, which is the chief centre of the S.C.M. in Delhi, and magnificent hospitality was shown me. Sen, the Secretary of the group, devoted himself to me entirely, and we formed a close association as we went together to all the meetings that had been planned, and visited the city and a new school of social service which, recently founded by the Y.W.C.A., is likely to become a living centre of Christian action in the University.

Delhi was freezing, but at Bombay I met once more the climate of the tropics. I was met at the aerodrome by Carlyle Patterson, a young professor from Wilson College whose acquaintance I had made the year before at the Westminster Conference ; and he conveyed me immediately to his S.C.M. group, to which I spoke about the Federation and its missionary task. There was an excellent discussion of a very theological character. This Bombay group was of a type new in my experience ; in Europe it would be called an evangelical group. My only other job here was to talk about World Student Relief and its work to the massed students of Wilson College, as indeed I did wherever I went. The Indian students are anxious to be involved in the work of world relief and they told me so in no measured terms. We also discussed politics and the colonial question, and I was hard-pressed on the problem of Indochina. Here too I had the joy of being able to speak French with some students who had studied it.

But once more time moved too fast and the hour of departure arrived before I had time to get to know Bombay. At nine o'clock, in the dark, the great DC-4 took flight for the West. At midnight on the following day I was back in Geneva in the cold of our old Europe.

PHILIPPE MAURY.

THE STUDENT WORLD CHRONICLE

Correspondence between the Asian Student Christian Movements and the S.C.M. of the Netherlands

Kandy, Ceylon, January 2nd, 1949.

To the S.C.M. of Holland

Dear Fellow Members of the S.C.M.,

As you will know, the Asian Leaders' Conference, organised by the World's Student Christian Federation, has during the last fortnight been taking place in Kandy, Ceylon ; some ninety of us from thirteen different countries have had the privilege of meeting in fellowship and prayer to discover the Will of God for our several movements, and to learn as individuals what our special responsibilities are in this vital moment in Asia, as in the world. More than once we have wished that representatives from your national movement had been with us ; instead we must try to express in this letter the matters about which we would much have preferred to have spoken with you face to face.

The moment of our meeting has coincided with a time of renewed crisis in the relations between your Government and the Republican Government of Indonesia, and as you can imagine, this turn of events affecting the relations between a European and an Asian people has evoked profound concern and deep sympathy in which everyone of us shares. We have been fortunate in having two representatives of the Movement of Indonesia present at our discussions and they have shared with us their hopes and fears and difficulties, as fellow-Christians, determined to achieve their freedom and independence. They have also helped to dispel the ignorance to which very many of us have to confess with regard to the life and work of the Church in Indonesia, which is called to witness in such an extremely perplexing political situation. We wish very much that views representative of public opinion in Holland could have also been available to

us, to help in this process of education and decision which has been forced upon us.

In spite of this ignorance as regards day to day events, the relative strengths of parties in Holland and in Indonesia, the underlying economic factors, etc., we believe we can and must hold a definite view on two matters, not as those who speak from an uncompromising position, but as men and women who are trying, albeit belatedly, to follow Christ in our political judgments.

The first is that Indonesia is still under the ultimate control of your country. To us in Asia few things seem more clear than the inalienable right all peoples have to self-determination and self-government, and the equally strongly held conviction that the present demand for national freedom throughout Asia is one that cannot and ought not to be resisted. The second matter upon which we are bound to speak out is that it is agreed by the United Nations Security Council, as by the more informed public opinion of Asia, that the recent second "police action" in Indonesia was carried out by your Government without consultation with the Good Offices Commission appointed by U.N.O. We are aware of some of the provocation met with by the Dutch Government but that does not change the fact that agreement was broken and force was used.

We are sure that many members of your S.C.M. must be as concerned as we are in this tragic development, and we are praying with you that God's Will may be done. At the same time it would be a real help to us if we knew your mind in the matter, and in what ways your national S.C.M. is tackling the problem through study and correspondence with the student movements in Indonesia, etc. From what we know we realise it must be a very difficult situation for you. As those called by God to stand with you in the human situation as it faces Indonesia, we write this letter. We believe that you will understand what we have tried to write with a sense of Christian responsibility, not only as those bound to pass judgment in the political realm, but also as those under the judgment of the sovereignty of God.

Our different movements represented here will await your answer with real expectancy, that out of what inevitably must be a divisive situation for Asia and the West, God may bring

deeper understanding and sympathy in the task to which He calls you and us in the days to come.

Let us pray for one another,

Yours sincerely, (Signed by 68 Delegates.)

Zeist, Holland February 12th, 1949.

To the S.C.M.S. of Asia

Dear Fellow Members of the S.C.M.,

The letter from your delegates at the Asian Leaders' Conference deeply moved us, and first of all we wish to express our gratitude for the Christian fellowship of which it is a token. We gratefully acknowledge with you that even in a time when such a painful tension exists between Indonesia — and in consequence Asia — and our country, only the grace of God and the love of Jesus Christ are binding us together. Therefore we thank God, and we want to thank you, for the understanding and sympathy shown in the letter from your delegates.

In trying to answer your letter we wish to leave no doubt whatever as to the deep sorrow which each of us feels that the negotiations of the Dutch Government with the Republic of Indonesia did not reach a peaceful solution but led to military action.

With even more stress we wish to declare that each of us acknowledges the right of the Indonesian peoples to independence and sovereignty, as it has been promised Indonesia in the declaration of Queen Wilhelmina of 6th December 1942 which promise was renewed in the declaration of Queen Juliana of 6th January 1949. Each of us accepts his task as a citizen of the Netherlands and as a Christian to help to promote that this promise will be kept and realized unrestrictedly.

We understand that what you most vividly hope to hear from our S.C.M. must be an open and unanimous denunciation of the "police action" taken by our Government in 19th December 1948. We must confess, however, with deep sorrow that we did not succeed in finding such an unanimous judgment as to the political necessity or lack of necessity, the moral justification or condemnability of the "police action". This results from different convictions which Christians in the Netherlands hold concerning the whole Indonesian problem as such, and the different conceptions of the nature, task and responsibility of the Government,

which convictions and conceptions have deep theological and religious roots. As our S.C.M. recruits its members from different churches and denominations, from different political parties as well, you may understand that it is quite impossible to unite on such vital and burning problems as are put before us in Indonesia and to give an unanimous answer, unless this would be a very unsatisfying compromise. Therefore we wish to express in this letter the opinions prevailing in our Movement.

We intend to try and give you some information on these different points of view in an enclosure; here we only wish to bring some clarification in what we believe is apt to cause a complete confusion and misunderstanding in any political discussion between Asian and Dutch people, even though they are Christians.

We gather from your letter that as Christians you cannot but identify yourself with the Asian (your national) cause. According to our experiences in discussions with people from Asia, what seems to be really asked from us is that we, also as Christians, not only dis-identify ourselves from our nation, but even disregard our solidarity with our people and our Government to declare ourselves in solidarity with your Asian cause, if not to identify ourselves with it. We are grateful for the understanding shown in your letter of our difficulties in this respect.

Nevertheless we wish to make clear that the only attitude for us as Christians anywhere and in any situation is to accept a *critical* solidarity with our people and with our Government and even if we have very strong criticisms, as many of us have in fact, we may not and cannot dissolve ourselves from this solidarity. This implies a co-responsibility for the political decisions and actions of our Government, as well as for many of us a deep feeling of bewilderment and guilt.

We understand the hopes and expectations, the fears and disappointments of the Indonesian peoples. Therefore we are grateful that the Dutch Government expressed the definite aim of real national freedom, but we regret deeply that the crisis of confidence bearing upon the relations between the two parties at this moment makes impossible the realization of this aim, and that mistakes and failures on both sides are constantly resulting from it.

After the struggles and exhaustion caused by the German occupation of our country it took some time for many Dutchmen

to realize that a new era had dawned for Indonesia (and Asia) and to recognize the expression of a legitimate claim of freedom in what they originally merely saw as a revolt. At present all political parties in the Netherlands acknowledge the right to national freedom and self-government of the Indonesian peoples. The differences between the parties concern the way to reach this goal. The "conservative" parties cannot see how this could be realised in a very near future (as the "progressive" parties advocate) without endangering order and wellbeing of the Indonesian peoples. For although we frankly admit that the relations between Indonesia and our country originate from a three centuries old colonial history, when the Netherlands over and over again are accused of colonialism and imperialism the present convictions and feelings of our people are misinterpreted. The truth is that all Netherlands parties, except the Communist Party, feel a deep responsibility to reach a solution by which Indonesia will not be delivered to chaos from which it would emerge a victim of either communistic or capitalistic exploitation. This responsibility cannot be denied, even when the colonial origin of the same is admitted. These parties wish to help to promote the establishment of strong, self-governing, federal United States of Indonesia, not as a generous gift but as their right, hoping that the United States of Indonesia will be willing to find a new relation with the Netherlands.

We are aware however that the realization of this aim is also hampered by hidden influences of individuals and groups, amongst whom also Dutchmen are found, who try to profit by a chaotic situation or to save their interests. We realise also that Indonesia is lying in a field of tension between great powers and that the international political and economic motives of these powers are bearing upon our relations. Christians in Asia and in the Netherlands should be on the watch and be critical in this respect. Even if we had enough information to do so, it would not be our task to comment in this letter upon the interest in Indonesia on the part of the United States of America, Great Britain, Australia, and Soviet Russia.

We have the impression that there is much misunderstanding as regards the position of the "Republic of Indonesia". Even before the first "police action" of July 1947 the Republic only represented the greater parts of Java and Sumatra. We know

that the Governments of the so-called Federal States (Borneo, Eastern Indonesia, Pasundan, East Sumatra) often have been accused of being puppets of the Dutch; we do not excuse the fact that some Dutch groups have misinterpreted their co-operation. But the reaction of the Federal States on the second "police action" has shown clearly that they stand for a free, sovereign, and federal Indonesia. It is not generally understood that notwithstanding their outspoken sympathy and admiration for the Republic they did not agree with aspirations for hegemony shown by certain groups within the Republic. Criticism of the "police action" by the Dutch Government has been expressed openly and even sharply by federal statesmen along with their desire that the Republic would be willing to take its proper place within the federal United States of Indonesia.

We do not know the special reasons of our Government for not consulting the Good Offices Commission (nor the Federal States in Indonesia) before the "police action", and this lack of information is a point of strong criticism for many of us.

We share your profound concern in the indeed tragic development and we pray with you that God's Will may be done!

As regards our relations with the Indonesian S.C.M., at the occasion of the first Federation Day of Prayer after the war in February 1946 we tried to re-establish contacts with the S.C.M. in Indonesia by sending telegrams to the P.M.K.I.¹ and the C.S.V.¹ in Batavia and Bandoeng. We received no answer and later we understood that the cables did not reach their destination. We made several efforts since to get contacts and succeeded with some of the C.S.V. groups, the letters to the P.M.K.I. remaining without reply. Malcolm Adiseshiah, who visited Indonesia as an Officer of I.S.S. and with whom we had a long conversation before his departure, advised us after his return not to try and establish a regular correspondence between our movements as the conditions were not favourable. Since 1947 we had a group of Indonesian and Chinese students who are studying in the Netherlands in our Student Summer Camps, amongst whom were many "republicans", Christians and non-Christians. In

¹ The P.M.K.I. is the republican-related S.C.M., and the C.S.V. is the non-republican related S.C.M. The leaders have never lost contact with one another. Both were represented at the Asian Leaders' Conference.

several universities we have regular discussion and Bible study groups.

At Whitsuntide we organised a conference for Christian political leaders from different political parties to come to a better understanding concerning the Indonesian problem.

In conferences and summer camps we regularly have collections for youth work in Indonesia. A possibility to remit this money could however not yet be found. At the present moment we are working out a relief scheme for the P.M.K.I. and C.S.V. in Java under the authority of World Student Relief, Netherlands Committee.

We are grateful for the good and profound contacts we had with the delegates from Indonesia to the Youth Conference at Oslo in 1947.

We are trying to build up a pen-friend system between Indonesian and Dutch students on the initiative of the Indonesian S.C.M.

We confess that we should have done more to draw the attention of our members to the issues at stake and to try to establish contacts with the P.M.K.I. We are comforted and strengthened by your assurance to stand with us, even in this painful and critical situation. We thank you for this opportunity to explain our position and to share our difficulties with you. Even if our opinions concerning the situation in Indonesia would lie far apart, we hope that we shall never lose the conviction that Jesus Christ, Who revealed to mankind God's grace and forgiveness, is binding us together in a common faith which transcends our sinful divisions.

We pray for Indonesia and our country and for all those whom God has called to find the way to a righteous solution according to His Will. We pray for all those who became victims of chaos and military action. We pray for the work of Church and Christian witness especially among students, in Asia as in Europe.

Ever yours in Christ,

On behalf of the General Committee
of the Student Christian Movement of the Netherlands:

H. L. LANGEVOORT, *Chairman*

J. DIRKSE, *General Secretary*

De Universitate

Now, as the Federation prepares for the General Committee in August, is the moment to try to evaluate the work of the University Commission of the W.S.C.F. and interpret the significance of the widespread discussion as to the responsibility of the S.C.M. for the University. What has God been saying to us ?

We do not think as Christians

The ten university teachers who participated in the Federation conference at the Château de Bossey in 1947 summed up their conclusions in three points, of which the first was :

a) "We consider that the implications of the Christian faith in the various spheres of knowledge have not been taken seriously with the result that our teaching and scholarship are divorced from our religious life and beliefs."

The Christian, like the Marxist, knows that thinking, scholarship, teaching are intimately bound up with action and with society. Therefore the above divorce is closely related to the other two criticisms :

b) "The university is no longer seen as a community with a purpose which teachers and students jointly seek to realize."

c) "The university... too often reflects the weaknesses and corruptions of society."

These three points show quite vividly the desperate situation in which the Christian professor and student is today. Probably that situation is no worse than it has ever been, but that is a very slight consolation for anyone who really tries to feel his way into the actual spiritual state of the university today. In our Federation discussions hitherto most attention has been given to an analysis of the mind of the modern university. It is generally admitted that a spirit suggested, but not precisely defined, by the term "scientific humanism", has overwhelmingly predominated in the Western university in recent times. There are of course local deviations arising from various forms of nationalism, incursions of Marxian idealism or a militant Hinduism. However, no matter what name you give it and no matter

what local nuances it may have, this spirit of the university is a very powerful reality and the average Christian in the university is like a poor fish swimming by himself in an enormous ocean! Since the Christians, (like most other people in the university), have largely surrendered to bourgeois individualism they are devoid of the strength and insight which should properly be theirs as members of the "communion of saints".

Indeed, it is not uncommon for Christian professors to be unaware that there are any other Christians on the staff of the university. When there is a dim consciousness of this fact they have seldom made any systematic effort to think together about the responsibility of making a common witness to their faith. No wonder they do not think as Christians!

Christian thinking does not mean thinking within the confines of a precisely formulated dogmatic framework. It does mean *common* thinking and sharing of problems and insights within the communion of saints. It means *concrete* thinking which is related to man and his need of salvation at every level of his life. What *Christian thinking* truly is probably defies exact definition? But it is certain that it is a demanding process, which requires discipline, unselfishness, commitment and working together with other Christians. It will mean thinking and living whose richness we only begin dimly to envisage.

In a serious study group in the S.C.M. the student has a better chance to do Christian thinking than is available at the moment to the Christian professor. But the students are handicapped by immaturity and lack of knowledge when they try to come to grips with the complex problems of today. They need the help of Christian professors. Unfortunately the latter are so permeated with the spirit of "scientific humanism" that they are unable to bring a Christian mind to the aid of the students. The result is that Christian students go out into the world with no clear intellectual preparation for discriminating among the spirits at work in the modern world so as to be able to perceive which are of Christ.

We have not begun to take Saint Paul seriously when he says "*Instead of being moulded to this world have your mind renewed and so... able to make out what the will of God is*".

Therefore the Church is confused

It is because her members are unable to "discern the spirits" that secularism penetrates the very bosom of the Church. The uncritical nationalism of many churches, their dependence on the dominant political authority and their buttressing of the prevailing economic order have been and are too patent to require elaboration here. But there are other less obvious evils which come from our failure to think as Christians.

The most fundamental is a misunderstanding of the nature of the Church's message and the rôle of the layman in announcing that message. The Gospel is not verbal. It is an act. It is the fact that mankind is saved in Jesus Christ, and not mankind merely as a sum of individuals but man and men *in toto* as individuals, as communities and as dwellers in the universe. This, surely, is part of the meaning of St. Paul's rich doctrine of Christ in Colossians. Christ is "prior to all and all coheres in Him". Just as the Gospel is not verbal, so its announcement is not primarily by "preaching". Preaching has an extremely important function to perform, but the primary announcement of the Gospel is by the appearance of "new men in Christ Jesus". The "new man" is really something new and different in *every* aspect of his being: his emotions, his words, his actions, his thinking, his communal activities. Since the life of a university graduate largely consists in the exercise of certain intellectual skills and disciplines which he developed in the university, his "newness" must be manifest in the exercise of these skills and disciplines. If seventy per cent of a man's waking life is his work as an engineer then seventy per cent of his job as a Christian is to incarnate the "new man" in his activities as an engineer. That we would like to evade the logic of the last sentence is not because of the truth that Christianity cannot be expressed in arithmetic, but because of the fact that we have not the vaguest notion as to what it means to exercise the profession of engineering as a Christian. And this, chiefly because we have never thought about it! This is the sort of fundamental problem with which the Christian Frontier Council in Great Britain and various laymen's movements in other countries are grappling. This new discovery of the

task of the layman is the most important "growing-point" for our understanding of the nature and function of the Church.

A second consequence has been the puerile reaction of the Church to science, a question which was discussed at the Federation Conference on "The University in a Technological Age" in July, 1948. In the nineteenth century the Church was largely fighting a rearguard action against a self-confident science, and constantly having to admit defeat, because she had unconsciously confused the eternal message of which she is the custodian with classic or feudal physical, psychological and philosophical theories. This was followed by the disgraceful period when theology waited wistfully at the table of the reigning Queen hoping to be vouchsafed a few crumbs of scientific evidence to buttress the faith. In the third phase, now that the atomic bomb has somewhat shaken men's confidence in the benevolence of their monarch, there is not lacking a supply of theologians who gloat over the possibility that men will be driven to the Church through fear. It seems incredible — to be happy because it is now patently clear that man is so powerful and so sinful that he can destroy himself. Of course there have been many theologians in all these periods who have avoided such gross errors but the above gives a faithful indication of the attitudes the average man of science has usually found in the Church. One of the most encouraging developments of the past few years has been the appearance of a theology which has neither an arrogant nor a servile attitude to science. Even so the basic problem has not yet been tackled : the creation of a community of scientists and theologians which could be the bearer of concrete insights and suggestions of the sort which would be of positive value in helping the scientist come to a Christian decision on the variety of problems which continually occur. These decisions in fact constitute the effect of science on the world and on mankind.

Both of the points above are related to the task of the theologians. On this question Daniel Jenkins stated at the first University Conference : "I am fully persuaded that theology stands to benefit from our renewed concern about the university as much as other subjects... Theologians need a totally new conception of their rôle in the university. Rather than sitting in our studies trying to formulate new scholasticisms, we theologians

should stand beside the doctor, the lawyer and the scientist in constant sympathetic converse with him, trying to view his problems from inside his situation, adding a voice with our own specialist knowledge to the voices which are prompting him, so that he can more surely come to a responsible decision. The theologian's task is not to achieve some nice, quiet, scientific description. It is to engage in a battle for the world. And unless we come to grips with the real world we betray our *raison d'être*." (*The Student World*, Fourth Quarter, 1947, p. 311.) Clearly if the theologians are to come to grips with the real world they will need the assistance of laymen, but if this is to be effective we need more laymen who are theologically alert than exist today.

The job of the Christian in the university

If the members of the Church are to learn to think as Christians the process must begin in the university. It might be thought that this statement exaggerates the importance of the university but throughout her history the Church has valued learning and promoted the creation of colleges and universities. A high appreciation of scholarship has been part of the Anglican tradition. Calvin built a college in Geneva shortly after the Reformation. Luther inveighed against the errors of some professors but was a firm believer in education and study and gained many followers in the university. (Incidentally, by quoting only Erasmus on p. 31 of the Federation Grey Book *The Task of the Christian in the University*, I greatly misrepresented and minimised the positive value of the Reformation for the universities.)

If Christians in the university are to learn what Christian thinking is we must do at least the following five things :

a) We must become a university Christian movement, that is a body of *student and professors* who together seek to live out the implications of their Christian faith in the university. This raises a number of tough questions to which I have no slick answers. St. Paul spoke of "the Church which met in the house of Aquila and Priscilla". Shall we not need to deepen our concept of the church so that we can speak of the "Church which meets in Prof. Smith's office" or "in the Biology Lab." ? What kind of activities will interest and best serve professors ? If professors

and students are on the same committee will not professors dominate? There are other questions but some of them would be answered by our second point.

b) We must train a *new type of Christian professor*. His newness would consist chiefly in his taking seriously the sort of questions we have raised in the first two sections of this article. In fact any good Christian professor of the past, and there have always been many, was a foretaste in a more or less perfect degree of the new type of professor. But they must become aware of one another and become more explicit as to the meaning of their vocation as Christian professors. As groups of them find concrete tasks to which they could set themselves they will be able to play a non-domineering role in a joint movement with the students since they would have their own responsibilities to absorb their energies. The present widespread failure of university staff to be able to provide adequate leadership for the S.C.M. coupled with the inability of the S.C.M. to be the sort of fellowship in which young lecturers can be trained to provide the right sort of leadership is a vicious circle which must be broken.

c) In the midst of all the discussion in university circles about *integration* we must learn to express the fact that in the last analysis it is in Christ alone that integration is given to us. Integration is finally to be achieved not by any compost of all knowledge ("General Education"), nor by embracing an ideology even the ideology of democracy, nor by intellectual assent to a philosophy even as comprehensive as Thomism. Integration can only result from an act of will, from pursuit of an all-embracing purpose — ultimately, only from submission *in a community* to Jesus Christ in whom all coheres (Col. 1: 17). If the Christian is clear about this he may find significant value in some of the schemes for "integration", and he will certainly have a point of reference to help him discern what is good in them. They may well serve an essential rôle in helping the university serve God, just as the "Law" which has no final authority can serve as a schoolmaster to Christ. A basis of integration for so social an institution as a university must contain as its chief ingredient a definition of social purpose, yet in the confused condition of our Western culture it is precisely impossible to find a commanding incarnation of social purpose.

We should note that a university cannot exist in the *idea* of such a purpose but only in a *society* dominated by it. In the Middle Ages the community of the universal Church provided such a social framework. More recently universities have been integrated on the basis of nationalism mitigated slightly by the universalism of science. The renowned Harvard Report based on the American way of life is an instance of this. The Ecumenical Church, if it became a much more vivid reality, could provide the social basis for a dynamic integrating sense of purpose in the university.

d) We must prosecute the discussion of the implication of Christianity for the *different fields of knowledge*. We have raised above the question of the relation of Christianity to science which was discussed at the Federation Conference in July 1948, and about which the Dutch S.C.M. has recently published a little book entitled *The Christian Scholar and his Discipline*. It seems clear that what is needed is studies by individuals and groups of *specific* disciplines such as is proposed in the Study Conference on "The Meaning of History" to be held in August 1949 under the joint auspices of the Ecumenical Institute and the Federation.

e) The commitment of our mind and studies to God and the petition that He will redeem all scholarship and make his Lordship manifest in the universities of the world must be constant elements in our prayers. I am sure that the forthcoming *Student Prayers* of the S.C.M. Press will help us all to make this particular part of our prayers more real and vivid.

The responsibility of the W.S.C.F.

It would be presumptuous of so amateurish and undergraduate a body as the Federation to imagine that it could assume any responsibility in such high matters as the above unless we are sure that God is calling us to act. But with that assurance we could go forward confident that, even with such weak and foolish material, God is able to work out his purpose among the strong and wise.

That the Federation has been so called by God seems certain. Already there are many Christian professors in the universities, often former members of the W.S.C.F., who are seriously perturbed and anxious to see more clearly the implications of their

calling as Christian professors and who are looking to the Federation for guidance. This was certainly one of my impressions after attending the successful conference of one hundred Christian professors and lecturers at Swanwick at New Year, which was sponsored by the Christian Frontier Council and the British S.C.M. It was also one of the conclusions drawn from the one-day conference in November 1945 of university teachers of the Madras-Vellore area in India. The rapidity with which the discussion, initiated in the British and French movements, has spread throughout the Federation proves the relevance of the issues which they first raised. At the Asian Leaders' Conference the university discussion aroused much interest and, though many of the issues were new to the younger members of the conference, it was generally felt that the problem of the university is one that desperately needs to be tackled by the S.C.M.s in Asia. This is especially necessary because most of the existent Federation literature on the subject was written against the background of Europe and America. The excellent book by Sir Walter Moberly entitled *The Crisis in the University* which is just being published by the S.C.M. Press provides a comprehensive summary of all the best thinking that hitherto has been carried on in the Federation and will almost certainly serve as our "university manifesto in English-speaking countries for the next several years".

At the last General Committee a University Commission was created thus suggesting the "problem of the university" as a departmental question, which might properly require the partial interest of some members of the Federation. Now it is abundantly clear that the questions which have grouped themselves around this one involve the whole nature and purpose of the W.S.C.F. and may well require a basic transformation of our Federation.

Where God will lead us no one can discern. No one foresaw the World Council of Churches when folk in the early days of the Federation began to assert their conviction that the disunity of the Church was a sin. Nor could anyone have foreseen the decisive way in which God used the Federation in the creation God of the Council. In an analogous way we may expect that mayagain use the Federation, if we are faithful, in recalling all scholarship to its Lord for the enrichment and purification of the Church and for the salvation of the world. A. JOHN COLEMAN.

BOOK REVIEW

WILLIAM TEMPLE, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY. His Life and Letters. By F. A. Iremonger. Oxford University Press. 25/-.

This is a good biography of a great man. One appreciates the desire to have William Temple's life written before the details could fade from men's minds, but there remains a regret that the definitive account had to be set down at such length before its true perspective could be seen. This is not a reflection upon the author, who has handled a mass of material with great skill, but rather a compliment, in that he has left the reviewer still unsatisfied and eager for more complete knowledge of one whose personality made such an impact upon his generation.

This book may be read for an understanding of the life of the Anglican aristocracy, or of the thinking of Oxford in the early part of the century, or of the rise of the social consciousness in British Christianity, or of the growth of the ecumenical movement. It throws into relief the effect of two wars upon the life of British society, and should give to many foreign readers the feel of Christian England in the midst of world events. Yet easily the best chapter is No. XXVII *The New Primate of All England*, which deals with the man himself in all he was and all he gave. Dr. Iremonger seems to over-describe what he himself knew, like the *Life and Liberty Movement*, and has a certain Anglican aloofness from other forms of Christianity when he deals with the forerunners of the World Council of Churches. But he knew and loved the man, whom so many thousands knew less well, and loved instinctively. Very rarely God gives us men who break open new possibilities of life for their contemporaries, and raise the whole level of Christianity to a new plane in which we breathe more invigorating air. William Temple was one of these.

Without wishing to compete with the labour movement for the signs of his affection, let us never forget that William Temple was supremely a students' man. At the height of his power he was easily the greatest exponent of the Christian faith in the universities. He visited Australia and the United States for the Student Christian Movement, but it was in university missions in Britain and at S.C.M. Quadrennial Conferences that he was the speaker inevitably at the top of the list. Far beyond the circle of those who heard him his books and articles, and indeed his general point of view, exercised a profound influence. In a letter to Dom Gregory Dix in 1939 he writes: "I was able to build bridges across which people could travel, from the outlook common in the universities and such places from 1910 to 1920 or even 1930, to a Christo-centric view of the world." These bridges were never remote ethereal structures, they were strong causeways of intellect and prayer, upon which a man could plant his feet and go forward from day to day. For countless university men and women did he build them and by his writings he will still go on building them.

William Temple knew and loved that amateur organisation of student life which is summed up in the World's Student Christian Federation. He always told us that he had learnt to pray with fresh reality in the S.C.M., and it was a very humbling confession to receive. There is a delightful letter to his mother dated July 28, 1907, in which he writes that at an S.C.M. conference "On the whole the most impressive meetings were two. One a description of the World Student Christian Conference held last year in Tokio, and followed by a missionary campaign in which the delegates — fellows about 25-30 — took part: they spoke very simply, with a great deal of feeling, though with restraint; and clearly had, while out there, experienced something which they believed to be the upholding power of the prayers of the students who had sent them. The other was a meeting for Indian missions, where an Indian called Datta spoke quite wonderfully. Yet the thing that really lives with me is Scott Holland's extraordinary oration on the power of Christ to regenerate society here or anywhere else..." Prayer in the life of the Federation, the missionary challenge of the Growing Church, the power of Christ to regenerate society — these three

great realities, which we still believe to be at the heart of our national movements and which we write about in *The Student World*, were the things which quickened William Temple's own life at its turning point. And he never forgot that, never became critical of the young because he himself had grown older, never sought to patronise or control, but only to be of service as a speaker or adviser to the student leadership of the day.

At the Manchester Quadrennial Conference of 1925, it was William Temple, the new bishop of the diocese, who kept the student chairman from nervousness by his friendly chat before the opening meeting, and sent along the platform at a critical moment the note which read: "Don't you think it would be a good idea for you to ask me to say the blessing?" And when the general secretaryship of the British S.C.M. passed from the hands of Canon Tissington Tatlow, it was William Temple who singled out the new man from Scotland in the back row at an Anglican reception and, coming over to him, said: "I have always been a sort of unofficial adviser to the S.C.M. Won't you come along and see me, if ever you get into a difficulty?" There are few more precious things in the life of the Church than this bond between its leaders and the independent Christian youth movements. Let us hope that the hundreds of Churchmen in many countries who read this book will catch this spirit. It has proved one of the most lively factors in creating a World Council of Churches, and it is essential for its continued health.

R. C. M.